# Chronicles

April 1996 A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE $3.95

## ATHENS AND JERUSALEM

The churches are politicking, the evangelicals have gone trendy, the pagans are back, and Nietzsche is laughing in his grave.

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Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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## On Radicals and Populists

I agree with Michael A. Hoffman II (Polemics & Exchanges, January 1996) that Vicki Weaver and Gordon Kahl were made of American mettle, but Robert J. Matthews? No way. Not if he means the Matthews of the notorious band of racist nuts known as The Order—the group that gunned down Denver radio personality Alan Berg for the "crimes" of being Jewish and liberal. Kahl and Weaver were Middle American martyrs, Matthews was an evil creep: the distinction isn't really so hard to make.

—*Cody Annixter*
*Buffalo, NY*

## The Editors Reply:

We heartily concur. Mr. Matthews' name failed to ring a bell.

## On Gunowners

Ronin Colman's aptly subtitled "The Second War Against Gunowners" ("Back From the Brink," December 1995) is likely to be considered "a bit paranoid" by those who love liberty yet see no harm in "reasonable gun control laws." But there is no such thing as a "reasonable gun law" if it focuses on an inanimate object rather than a violent criminal action. In biblical terms, Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the command "Thou Shalt Not Murder." That injunction did not prohibit the possession of a rock with which a murder could be committed.

The purpose of "weapons control laws" has never been to control weapons, but to control the subjects of those doing the controlling. It is simple to understand why in ancient times the Philistines forbade the Israelites from having blacksmiths: "otherwise the Hebrews will make swords or spears" (I Samuel 13:19-20). And we can just as readily understand why Hitler prohibited Jews from possessing firearms on the eve of *Kristallnacht* and the holocaust.

For what reason would those in power in the United States attempt to do the same thing? A quick scan of the history of "gun control" in this nation shows that its first major use was to keep guns out of the hands of blacks. Reread the infamous 1857 *Dred Scott* decision in which Justice Taney declared that if Scott, a freed slave, were allowed *all* of the rights of citizens, "persons of the negro race (would have) full liberty of speech . . . to hold public meetings upon political affairs, and to keep and carry arms wherever they went." Then consider the seminal Second Amendment case, *United States* v. *Cruikshank*, 1876, which held that it "is a limitation upon the power of Congress and the National Government" and therefore *did not* preclude the Ku Klux Klan from conspiring with a local sheriff to prohibit freed slaves from possessing arms or attending political meetings!

What the opponents of gun rights never mention is that all Supreme Court decisions prior to this century held that the Bill of Rights was a limitation only on Congress. They focus on a statement in *Cruikshank* in which the Court correctly states: "The bearing of arms for a lawful purpose is not a right *granted* by the Constitution." The antigun crowd never mentions the very next sentence, which concludes the thought: "Neither is it in any manner dependent upon that instrument for its existence." In other words, the right to keep and bear arms existed prior to the Constitution (See *Blackstone's Commentaries*), and was merely restated and guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. It was the ultimate check and balance without which the people would have rejected the powerful central government laid out in the Constitution.

By the turn of the century, "gun control" was expanded as a means of controlling immigrants—code-named "anarchists." Then, when second-generation Americans in New York City armed themselves against protection racketeers, corrupt Tammany Hall Senator "Big Tim" Sullivan in 1911 enacted the handgun licensing law which bears his name, creating a safe work environment for crooks.

In the 1920's, "gun control" was mainly promoted by big business as a means of controlling "criminals," i.e., strikers. And in 1934, the Roosevelt administration passed the "machine gun act"—not to control a few minor hoodlums, but out of fear of a Depression-inspired revo-



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lution by the Bonus Marchers, Army veterans who knew how to use machine guns.

In the spring of 1941, gun registration laws—like those that had been enacted in Europe before World War II—were pending in 40 state legislatures. The purported reason was the need to control "Fifth Columnists."

The justification for "gun control" often changes, but the reason is always the same: people control. The race riots of the 1960's and "Burn, Baby, Burn," much more than the murders of the Kennedy brothers and Martin Luther King, Jr., caused the 1968 Gun Control Act.

In 1986, Congress prohibited more privately owned, legal machine guns, although there is only one known case of a registered owner (a cop) using one in a crime. In 1994, Congress banned evil-looking semiautomatic rifles with "dangerous" features like bayonet lugs, though less than one percent of crimes are committed with such guns, and there has never been a documented case of a bayonet charge between drug gangs.

No city, no state, no nation has ever reduced its crime rate by passage of a gun law. So why are ever-more-stringent laws continuously proposed? People control. In January 1968, when the Supreme Court ruled that a prohibited person could not be required to register an illegal gun in *United States* v. *Haynes*, the city of Chicago immediately modified its registration law to exempt criminals and the mentally deranged from having to register their guns. Only the law-abiding need comply.

If a law cannot, does not, and will not reduce crime, and can be legally ignored by its claimed targets, it is not a reasonable law—and gun laws are not. It is a question of freedom, and the right to protect self, family, and community from criminals, whether elected or not.

Without freedom there will be no firearms among the people; without firearms among the people there will not long be freedom. Certainly there are examples of countries where the people remain relatively free after the people have been disarmed, but there are no examples of a totalitarian state being created or existing where the people have personal arms.

Privately owned guns are an insurance policy. The fact that their owners *have no desire* to use them against a criminal or a criminal government is as immaterial as the fact that we keep our homeowner's insurance in force though we have no desire for our house to burn.

*—Neal Knox*
*Vice President, National Rifle Association*
*Silver Spring, MD*

## CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS

**JOE OCCHIPINTI** continues to be denied justice. As Greg Kaye reported in the October 1993 *Chronicles*, Occhipinti was the highly decorated undercover agent for the Immigration and Naturalization Service who was framed, tried, convicted, and sentenced to prison for doing his job too well. Fluent in three languages, Occhipinti had distinguished himself as an expert on Dominican organized crime—i.e., drug dealing, gunrunning, money laundering, and the counterfeiting of Food Stamps and Green Cards for illegal aliens—especially as it operates in the crime-infested area of upper Manhattan known as Washington Heights. But when his intelligence work led to so many arrests in the late 1980's that the Dominican drug trade in this area was being seriously hindered, the heat came down on Occhipinti. It seems the Federation of Dominican Merchants and Industrialists of New York—a reputed front for the Dominican drug cartel—had donated large sums of money to Mayor David Dinkins, and ever responsive to the needs of his constituency, Dinkins led the fight to stifle Occhipinti.

Occhipinti was arrested and charged with violating the civil rights of the Dominican drug dealers—specifically, he was accused of having mishandled search warrants—and was convicted and sentenced in 1992 to 37 months in prison. When Occhipinti appeared on the *Jackie Mason Show* to protest the conviction, Judge Constance Baker Motley abrogated Joe's assignment to a minimum-security prison in Tennessee, ordered him shackled in body chains and leg irons as a "dangerous criminal," and sent him to a maximum-security facility in Oklahoma, where he was released into the "general population," meaning Occhipinti was left to fend for his life among drug dealers and murderers whom he himself had arrested years earlier. After seven months of this near death sentence, friends of Occhipinti convinced George Bush, in one of his last acts as President, to commute Joe's sentence in January 1993.

Today, Joe Occhipinti seeks a new trial that will clear his name, release his federal pension, and restore his rights as an American citizen, which continue to be denied him because his sentence was merely commuted: he was not pardoned by President Bush. Judge Motley, however, has blocked his efforts. In his motion for a new trial, Occhipinti requested a change of venue, away from New York's Southern District, where he had uncovered corruption in the U.S. Attorney's office. He also requested that Judge Motley recuse herself for conflict of interest. Motley—the first black female federal judge and longtime "civil rights activist" who, according to Kaye and the Occhipinti defense team's December 1995 press release, was exposed by Senator James Eastland of the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee as a former Young Communist League organizer—first delayed her decision on the motion for over a year and then denied it without explanation. Though this politically powerful judge holds the dubious distinction of being the most "overturned on appeal" jurist in New York's Southern District, a Court of Appeals refused late last year to overturn her decision on this particular case.

New evidence concerning the conspiracy to frame Occhipinti has also surfaced since our first coverage of this story. A fellow who has held numerous diplomatic positions for the Dominican Republic, including Ambassador to Jamaica and Consul General to the United States, has come forward and signed two sworn affidavits. While he was stationed in America, Dominican drug lords in New York



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tried to recruit him in their efforts to "eliminate" Occhipinti. Joe "was a threat to their illegal businesses, which included loan sharking, gambling, drug distribution, and the employment of illegal aliens," he stated. According to Kaye, this affidavit is "replete with explosive revelations including naming the actual intermediary who delivered cash political contributions from the [Dominican drug] cartel to Mayor David Dinkins [and showing that] the Mayor was 'head cheerleader' of the cabal that demanded the prosecution of Occhipinti on civil rights charges."

Most interesting is the sworn testimony of another witness, who was too afraid to come forward while Mayor Dinkins was still in office. His revelations are so shocking, says Kaye, that Occhipinti's defense team took him to a private detective agency for a three-hour polygraph test, which he passed "with flying colors."

Apparently this witness had spoken about Occhipinti with John Kennedy, Jr., who was one of the prosecutors assigned to handle many of the drug busts that derived from the information gathered by Occhipinti and his INS task force. According to this source, on the night of June 12, 1991, while conversing over drinks, Kennedy grew despondent and lamented the fact that he would be testifying the next day against an innocent man, meaning Occhipinti. "Occhipinti was an innocent victim," Kennedy reportedly said. "He'd been set up by the government, drug dealers, and Mayor Dinkins, who the drug dealers had in their pocket. The case stinks to high heaven, it's all about race, politics and power."

Upon hearing this, the affiant claims to have chided "John-John," calling him "a profile in courage." Kennedy "did not say or do anything in response—he just sat there, his head hung down in shame. Then, after a long, awful silence, he said, 'You just don't understand the pressure I'm under.'" According to Kaye, if Occhipinti receives a new trial and "John-John" refuses to testify voluntarily, Kennedy will be subpoenaed.

The witnesses who have hesitated to come forward and to testify on Occhipinti's behalf have had legitimate reasons to fear reprisals. Just ask former U.S. Congressman Guy Molinari, Staten Island Borough President and the person primarily responsible for convincing President Bush to commute Occhipinti's sentence. When Janet Reno's Justice Department pressured Molinari to drop Joe's cause, and he refused, the FBI tried to frame him. The *New York Post* reported on the plot against Molinari in a story last April 26, and a former law clerk named Alma Camarena has confirmed the scheme. The FBI reportedly came to her office in Queens and pressured her to "set up Mr. Molinari by wearing a wire against him. I said 'yes' only because I was afraid." According to Kaye, this woman is not an "uninformed" witness: her father was once secretary of state of Puerto Rico.

Waco and Ruby Ridge have had their day in court, and it's time for congressional hearings on this latest abuse of federal power. Congressman James Traficant (Democrat-Ohio), a former sheriff sympathetic to law enforcement officers, has entered hundreds of pages of evidence documenting Occhipinti's innocence into the *Congressional Record*, and he has rallied some 40 fellow congressmen to support Joe's cause, but thus far their efforts have been to no avail. "For the past two years," said Traficant in a letter to Representative Jack Brooks (Democrat-Texas) in 1993, "we have been frustrated and stonewalled by the Democrat-controlled Judiciary Committee and the Clinton Justice Department. You have an opportunity to take a strong stand on the side of a brave and courageous law enforcement officer who fell victim to the insidious drug lords who continue to undermine American society." Keeping up the pressure, Traficant wrote last year to House Judiciary Committee Chairman Henry Hyde (Republican-Illinois): "Since Mr. Occhipinti's conviction, an array of evidence has been uncovered which indicates that he may have been the victim of a conspiracy by Dominican drug dealers, and key facts in his case were withheld or mishandled by the U.S. Justice Department."

Congressman Traficant deserves praise for leading this crusade on Capitol Hill, but in one respect he obscures the real issue at hand. Yes, Occhipinti was the victim of "insidious drug lords" and of "mishandled" evidence, but the rot highlighted by this case runs deeper than this. Mark Twain said it best, that America has "legislatures that bring higher prices than any in the world." Drug lords, in other words, don't operate in a vacuum, without political protection, and according to Kaye and Occhipinti, the public would be "shocked" by the number of U.S. congressmen accepting contributions from drug cartels.

Readers interested in fighting the true kingpins obstructing the War on Drugs may contact the Joe Occhipinti Legal Defense Fund at P.O. Box 318, Manalapan, New Jersey, 07726. A copy of the four-and-a-half hour video called "Strange Justice: The Joe Occhipinti Story" can be obtained for a donation of $23.95.

*—Theodore Pappas*

**THE CIVIL WAR** and Hollywood have been a pair ever since Ken Burns—because of potential profits, of course. But most of these recent pictures, with their emphasis on marketing rather than script or acting, have had more in common with Nintendo than any real war.

For the pittance of $500,000, independent filmmaker Robby Henson has done the war justice. *Pharaoh's Army* is a beautiful film and one of the best war movies made in years. Written and directed by Henson, based on a tale told by a Kentucky mountaineer, and set and filmed in Kentucky, the film concentrates on one small, half-legendary story, and yet encapsulates a war that was all the more bitter because it was fought among countrymen.

A young mountain woman named Sara Anders (played by Patricia Clarkson), whose husband is off fighting for the Confederacy, has been left behind on the family farm with her children. As the film opens, she is burying her daughter. Soon after the funeral, she is visited by five Yankee soldiers quartered nearby at Cumberland Gap, who have her name as a Confederate sympathizer and who consequently have come to take all her food. But when one of the young soldiers has an accident on the farm, they are forced to stay put until he is strong enough to move. That's when the story begins.

The movie's subtitle is "A Very Private Civil War," and there are in fact no battle scenes. Here the real fight is between Sara and the Union captain, and the film follows the development and inevitable ruin of their friendship: it's the great conflict writ small.

Effectively widowed, with one precious child left to her and a hardscrabble farm that must somehow feed them both, Sara is a taut, silent woman without much besides her boy, her cause, and



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her pride. With her husband in the army, she is left behind to do the hating. Faced with an Indiana captain (played beautifully by Chris Cooper) who treats her with an unaccustomed kindness, she faces a painful trial of her loyalties, and by necessity she drags her young son along with her.

There are several wonderful scenes in the film, one of the best showing Sara rocking herself beside her daughter's grave, in an eerie and very real portrayal of overwhelming grief. Clarkson has another striking scene in which she goes to wash her dress (and her soul) in the creek. Henson acknowledges that "some people have been put off by how cold she is, especially at the end. But I wanted to be truthful to the Scotch-Irish women."

He has been truthful to that and to much more by creating a film that touches on many of the ironies of the war, without seeming labored. Many spanking-new immigrants from Europe ended up fighting to teach the South what it meant to be an American, and there is one here, a Pole nicknamed "Chicago" for his new hometown (he's a sympathetic character, played well and with a completely credible accent by Robert Joy). To his captain, who likes him, Chicago is nevertheless an outsider, who has inexplicably taken sides in an American fight.

The role both Northern and Southern pastors played in supporting (or inciting) their congregations is made crystal clear by Kris Kristofferson's half-fey Confederate preacher, and by the story the Union captain tells of how he was recruited at church. Also, the one black character in the film fights on the Southern side, to the astonishment of the Union sympathizers on screen and no doubt several in the audience.

Yet Henson, who like many Kentuckians had family on both sides of the war, does not consider his film pro-Southern. Perhaps it seems so only because Henson has so much compassion for his characters on both sides, and because today, not to demonize the South is by default to defend it.

Sometimes there is nothing so current as ancient—which in American terms means 19th-century—history. As American troops are once again sent off to fight somebody else's civil war in Bosnia, we would do well to be reminded by films like this one that war is a very hard necessity. I am not thinking so much of people's lives, even, though lives are important enough: the hell of it is that there is no high moral ground in wartime. The nature of war prevents that. No one can fight, even for the most justified cause, and not do violence to his own ethics. War changes our souls, and seldom for the better, even when our cause is right. And if it is wrong?

*Pharaoh's Army* is available on video this month from Orion Home Video, and will be shown on PBS television stations this September and October.

—*Katherine Dalton*

**WHEN CHRISTIANS** invite Muslims into their homes, it sometimes happens that the guests wish to perform their ritual prayers at the specified "prayer time." This may be intended as a witness of their Muslim commitment, but it is not a religious obligation as such, as the prayers can be made up later, at home. This means that it is not an offense for the Christian host to ask the guests to defer their prayers until they return home, but of course it is also possible to accommodate their wish. In countries where there are many Muslim immigrants, churches have been asked to provide facilities for Muslim worship; until now, this request has seldom been granted, at least as far as the sanctuaries are concerned.

It is accepted as a matter of course that Muslims will not make their own mosques available for Christian services, and of course they cannot be faulted for this, because it would be inconsistent with the fundamentals of their faith. Muslims who take their faith seriously, and even many who do not, naturally understand a similar reluctance on the part of Christians. Christians, by contrast, often do not see the issue clearly enough to take a firm stand, perhaps thinking that by offering their facilities for Muslim worship they will win friends and perhaps eventually create an openness to the Gospel, but in fact the Muslims will generally regard the Christians as insincere, superficial, worldly, and impious.

Last December, while commenting on Bosnia, Republican Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole, a Methodist who attends a conservative congregation, stated that while we intend to be even-handed in Bosnia, "We are not neutral: we are pro-Muslim." Surely Senator Dole does not mean to imply "anti-Christian," because, like many American Protestants, he hardly identifies the Orthodox Serbs with Christianity. In fact, to be "pro-Muslim" in such a situation is to be anti-Christian. Attitudes such as that expressed by Senator Dole are received by most Muslims as a sign of the weakness of the individual, of his faith, and of Christianity itself, and hardly contribute to interfaith tolerance.

Tolerance makes sense only when different parties respect one another, and it is hard to respect a group or party that is lacking in confidence and self-respect. If any reader is aware of a similar situation anywhere in the world concerning a prominent Islamic official who has said, "We are not neutral, we are pro-Christian," we would be glad to hear of it.

—*Harold O.J. Brown*

**OBITER DICTA:** It's not too late to reserve a place at the annual conference of the Midwest G.K. Chesterton Society, which will be held from June 27-29 at the Cousins Center in Milwaukee. Past speakers at Chesterton Society conferences have included Thomas Fleming, editor of *Chronicles*. For more information, write to John Peterson, 740 Spruce Rd., Barrington, IL 60010.

We are pleased to announce that the first session of the Southern League Summer School will be held from June 30 to July 5 at the Kinard Conference Center in Leesville, South Carolina. The faculty of this school includes Michael Hill as well as Thomas Fleming. High school juniors and seniors, college graduates and undergraduates, may enroll. For more information, write or call The Southern League, P.O. Box 40910, Tuscaloosa, AL 35404-0910, (205) 553-0155.

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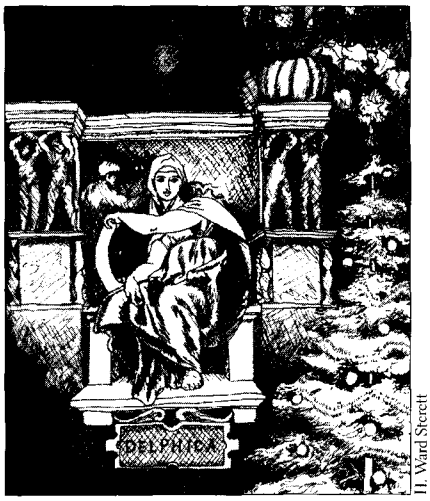


# Athens and Jerusalem

by Thomas Fleming

The holiday season is responsible for some of modern America's most deeply felt traditions: cheap airline tickets on Christmas day, seasonal hymns like "Jinglebell Rock" and "Blue Christmas," ACLU suits against the school Christmas pageant, and the Andy Williams Christmas special, for which the divorced Mr. Williams (one of whose wives killed her lover, Olympic skier Spider Sabich) had to hire actors to play the family he did not have.

The one holiday custom I kept religiously was to listen to Herbert W. Armstrong of the Worldwide Church of God, who every year came on the air to denounce Christmas as a pagan celebration. Alternating between biblical quotations condemning tree worship and news stories on the high rates of depression and suicide, Herbert W. (or, before they quarreled, his son Garner Ted) reveled in anti-Yuletide indignation. The Armstrongs were right about the Christmas blues. Even in the best of times Christmas can be depressing, if only because the reality of Christmas present can never live up to the imagination of Christmases past. But a few minutes of Herbert W.'s self-righteousness were always enough to restore my good humor. I might have been born in the wrong century, but at least, I would reflect, I am not a British Israelite.

I have never learned on what basis the British Israelites decided that the English are the lost tribes of Israel, but the condemnation of Christmas is all of a piece with fantasies about the children of Israel. Within Protestantism, there has always been a Judaizing strain that sought to purify Christianity of such pagan vestiges as icon-worship and holy water, Yule logs and jack-o'-lanterns, good works and Aristotelian philosophy. Every year at Halloween, I begin to think of myself as a persecuted minority. Here in the upper Midwest, our great Scottish holiday is boycotted by large numbers of Swedish and German Calvinists who mistakenly think themselves Lutherans. The same people would be shocked by Herbert W. Armstrong's attacks on the pagan German custom of worshiping evergreens, but they condemn all the customs surrounding All Souls' Day and its eve as Satanism.

We ex-Anglicans (there are almost literally no believing Anglicans left in the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America), we ex-Anglicans have always taken a more latitudinarian approach to pagan survivals. More than once, C.S. Lewis twisted St. Athanasius into saying that Christ was the fulfillment of the highest aspirations of ancient paganisms. The love He brought went deeper than Eros or Aphrodite, and in turning water into wine at the wedding of Cana, He revealed himself as the true Dionysus. If, as all Christians believe, Christ was the Logos, the divine Word through whom all things were made, then He was in the universe from the beginning, inspiring Hebrew prophets and pagan philosophers alike.

There is a hymn (Episcopalian, of course) which, after expressing thanks and praise for the prophets, moves on to the Greeks:

> For Socrates who phrase by phrase
> Talked men to truth, unshrinking,
> And left for Plato's mighty grace
> To mold our ways of thinking;
> For all who wrestled sane and free,
> To win the unseen reality,
> To God be thanks and Glory.

Some Christians, believing that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are a completely Hebraic compendium of all that our Creator wants us to know, profess to be shocked by such language, and this tendency to obscurantism was pronounced in many of the fathers of the early church. "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" asked Tertullian. In some of the fathers, hostility to learning can be explained as part of their general revulsion against pagan society; in others, they were conscious of their own inferiority in engaging intellectual combat with educated pagans. But even so erudite and polished a writer as St. Jerome felt guilty for his secular learning. Christ



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came to him in a dream, he says, and rebuked him for being not *Christianus* but *Ciceronianus*.

Other fathers were more generous to pagan philosophy. Justin Martyr writes to the young Marcus Aurelius and his brother, claiming that the moral principles which pagan philosophers have only taught, Christians actually live out every day, and there is no need to discuss the importance of philosophy to such theologians as Gregory of Nyssa and Origen.

Perhaps the supreme example is Augustine of Hippo. Like many early Christians, Augustine—a learned and brilliant rhetorician by background—dallied with the idea of forming a school curriculum based on Christian and Hebrew writings alone, but in the end he had to give it up. Pagan culture, in the broadest sense, is part of who we are as civilized men, and to cut out the Greek and Roman elements from Christianity requires a finer blade than anyone has yet discovered. If any Protestants are under the delusion that purging the church of classical paganism was a main point of the Reformation, they will have to explain not only the immense erudition displayed by the principal reformers but also the contributions to classical philology made by Calvinist and Lutheran humanists, such as Joseph Justus Scaliger. Only look at the footnotes to Plato, Seneca, and Aristotle in Calvin's *Institutes*. But there are no Lutherans any more, and scarcely any Calvinists, by which I mean theologians and ministers that Calvin would deign to speak with. Calvin wrote in Latin and French. How many of them, today, can read, much less write, either?

If this first objection to pagan culture may be dismissed as obscurantism, the second is rather the opposite in being too clever, too progressive. This familiar story goes something like this: there is a primitive Christianity that can be teased out of the Gospels, particularly Mark, which is subsequently contaminated by the Hellenistic interpretations of Paul and even John's Gospel. This primitive Christianity, in some versions, knows of no distinctions between male and female, straight and perverse; it is nonjudgmental and antiphilosophical. Taken to one extreme, this is the gospel according to the World Council of Churches, and to another it leads to the Children of God, the Way, and countless other sects and cults that tell you, in John Lennon's phrase, "All You Need is Love."

But the facts of the case are somewhat more difficult to grasp. Those of us who believe it is no accident that the Son of God was born to a family whose head traced his ancestry back to David may also find it difficult to believe that it is any accident that he was born into a world where Roman law and administration made it possible to spread ideas throughout the Mediterranean world and into Northern Europe, from the sources of the Nile in Africa almost to the Firth of Forth. We might also wonder if it is any accident that He was born into a world whose mind was shaped by philosophers who provided the concepts and arguments in which the mysteries of creation and redemption could be expressed.

For a very long time philosophers have wanted to disentangle the Christian strand from the fabric of Christendom. The project has taken many forms. Among the earliest was Descartes' sly professions of orthodoxy that he used to mask his revolutionary design of basing all humane learning—science, philosophy, ethics, politics—on a scientific method that is divorced from both tradition and revelation. In this century Leo Strauss and his disciples (e.g., the late Allan Bloom) have carried on a similarly covert campaign against Christianity, which they see as the chief obstacle to the realization of themselves as philosopher-kings. However, the most spirited attacks have been made by neopagans.

The earliest neopagans seem to have been Platonists like the Byzantine mystic George Gemistus Plethon, and some of the members of Ficino's "academy" in Florence. The most effective of all the anti-Christian philosophers has been Friedrich Nietzsche, whose rich and valuable work I am loath to criticize in brief. Full of praise for the nobility and grandeur of the Old Testament, Nietzsche regarded the New Testament as a species of degenerate rococo.

To put his critique in a very small nutshell, the mad philologist thought that Christianity, while appealing to a very high type of humanity, degraded the artist into self-abnegation and a rejection of the world. "Piety, the 'life in God,'. . . would appear as the subtlest and final offspring of the fear of truth." Nietzsche does concede that for the majority of men, who are born for slavery, Christianity makes them content with their lot, and that even for those who will some day command, it is good for them to learn obedience; nonetheless, he consistently treats the religion of Christ as an infection, a cultural poison that has stunted human growth.

Later neopagans have not shared Nietzsche's admiration for the Jews, and one of the principal charges against Christians is that they are warped by an Oriental and Semitic superstition that has weakened the character of Western man. At the extremes, this analysis serves as the justification for anti-Semitism and persecution, but in its milder forms neopaganism is little more than a nostalgia for the childhood of civilization. Alain de Benoist's Indo-Europeanism is the best example of this tendency. At the very least, Benoist would argue, Europe has outgrown the need for Christianity and is free to return to its pagan and classical roots. So far from endorsing Nietzsche's glorification of pagan violence, M. de Benoist contrasts the broad-minded tolerance of the ancients with the bigotry of Christian witch-hunters and inquisitors.

Benoist and his friends have succeeded in putting their project on the table, at least among European intellectuals, but the reason does not lie, I think, in any yearnings after Odin and Zeus (although I did recently meet an English Odinist in a pub, and he almost turned the beer sour with his praise of Ingmar Bergman films and a project to make Old Norse a required subject).

The pagan gospel according to Benoist is attractive precisely because its anti-Christian arguments fit in neatly with the Enlightenment notions that have formed the minds of our intellectual class. Polytheism can stand in for diversity, and any stick—pagan or atheist—will do to whip the Christian dog. Deists like Voltaire and Jefferson were hoping to preserve all that is good in Christianity, while jettisoning both the New Testament's miracles and the Old Testament's Jewish superstitions and taboos.

If Christianity has made the West weak, sentimental, incapable of defending itself, it is odd that these tendencies first showed at the precise time when faith was growing faint. For more than 15 centuries, Christians served in armies, acquired wealth, defended themselves from attack, fought duels, and sought revenge. Where is the weakness in Basil the Bulgar-Slayer, who blinded an entire army of Bulgars, or Charlemagne, or Richard of England? It was only in the Enlightenment—a period of de-Christianization—that Europeans began to deride the Crusades, and it was a Christian reactionary, Sir Walter



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Scott, who wrote novels extolling the Christian heroism of the Crusaders.

Oh, well, I have been told, those heroes were not good Christians. Who says so? Not the first gentile Christian, a Roman centurion converted by Peter; not the Popes, who called repeatedly for Crusades; and not Archbishop Turpin, one of Roland's companions, who, even with four lanceheads in his breast, dies fighting, surrounded by "four hundred men, / Some wounded, some clean through the body cleft, / And some of them made shorter by the head."

Perhaps the greatest pressure against the rights of self-defense and revenge was exerted by the Christian Church, which preached forgiveness of enemies and avoidance of bloodshed. Unfortunately, the Church's positions on self-help, revenge, and capital punishment have been seriously distorted by liberal theologians. In the Old Testament, of course, death is the punishment for dozens of crimes—homicide, sacrilege, witchcraft, adultery, etc. Cases of homicide were a family affair, as at Athens. A close kinsman of the victim, the avenger of blood, was responsible for tracking down and killing the killer.

The age of "avengers of blood" had long passed by the time of Jesus' ministry, and it was to an empire governed by Roman law and the law of the Jewish state that early Christians would have looked in their search for justice. There is no reason to assume that Jesus or his disciples were pacifists. Given the opportunity to denounce the profession of arms and capital punishment, neither Jesus nor his disciples spoke out.

For St. Paul, the sword symbolizes the power of the state to defend its subjects from evil: "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (Romans 13:3-4). Note the somewhat technical term "revenger," "*ekdikos*." The just ruler, so far from acting as a disinterested enforcer of abstract rules, actually takes revenge upon the evildoer.

There were pacifists and quietists in the early church, but the mainstream of Christian theology recognized that both social necessity and justice were sometimes to be maintained only with the sword. Homicide in self-defense is permitted by St. Thomas so long as the force used is aimed at defense rather than killing, and there is little warrant either in Christian Scriptures or in the fathers for revenge killings or vendettas. For the early fathers, the assumption had to be that the Roman state was capable of dispensing justice; by the Middle Ages, justice was in the hands of the Emperor, kings, and minor nobles who might prescribe trials of ordeal or judicial combat. What Christian doctrine has trouble grappling with is the situation of a wild frontier, where there is no justice, with periods of insurrection where authority breaks down, or with social conditions like that of Albania and Montenegro 100 years ago, where the only justice possible lay in the hands of a murdered man's next of kin.

What Nietzsche and M. de Benoist appear to dislike is not so much the robust faith of historic Christendom, as the mild-mannered Sunday-school Methodism, Deism's foster child, that has replaced the militant Christianity that is inextricably bound up with all that is best in our civilization.

Benoist makes a good case for pagan generosity and tolerance of diversity, but there are two obvious difficulties. Greek pagans were, it is all too true, willing to concede that other nations had their gods and that some of those gods might well be identical with Apollo and Zeus. In what way this differs from the transformation of satyrs into saints, against which the late Herbert Armstrong railed for so many years, I cannot imagine. The ancients did, after all, engage in persecution even before the arrival of Christianity. In classical Athens—a period I choose because it is the high watermark of ancient civilization (why lie? of all civilization)—the prosecutions of Anaxagoras and Socrates, whatever the ultimate motives, prove that diversity of opinion had its limits. Look at the portrayal of the beer-swilling loutish Egyptians in Aeschylus' *Supplices*, if you want to see what Athenians thought of immigrants, or of the same people in Herodotus's *Histories*. The one thing we can concede to the Egyptians: they were exactly the kind of tolerant and open-minded pagans celebrated by M. de Benoist, and they disgusted the Indo-European peoples he wishes to celebrate.

Let us put our objection in a nutshell: it is this very fetish of toleration and diversity that has landed us where we are, and as a defender of the West against our enemies, neopagans may turn out to be no more reliable than an American Catholic bishop or a Congregationalist Food Stamp facilitator.

Any dream of a new civilization liberated from the ancient faith is a progressive fantasy. Man will have religion, and if he cannot get the genuine article he will settle for any cheap knockoff he can get his hands on: Marxism, feminism, Gaia-worship, self-actualization cults, scientific racism, the Men's Movement, Scientology. Bereft of God, we shall only worship Golden Calfs or moonfaced gurus. A civilized nonbeliever should work very hard to preserve Christianity as a civilized institution that channeled the religious impulse away from vulgar nonsense and into activities that have given us most of our greatest art and literature. The works of the Deists, which have done so much to subvert Christendom, he would want burned by the public hangman.

The East/West conflict today reminds us of our connections with the Greeks and with that form of Christianity that took shape in the territory of the Roman emperors whom Western barbarians insisted on calling kings of the Greeks. Our betrayal of our Orthodox brothers led to the fall of Constantinople, the near-conquest of Christian Europe by the Muslims, the subversion of every revolution against the Turkish rulers of the Balkans, and now—as prelude to the last act, when the followers of a prophet every bit absurd as the Reverend Moon have been pouring into Bosnia to firm up the staging area for their *jihad* against Europe—we are still fighting among ourselves, like Uniate and Orthodox Greeks on the eve of the Turkish entry into Constantinople: Catholic against Protestant, Western Christendom against Eastern, freethinkers against believers against Jews against pagans.

It is not that these quarrels are insignificant, but, from the point of view of the civilization, they are family quarrels among people who share a language of discourse and cultural reference that is completely foreign to the Muslims, fetishists, and cultists, who cannot tell the difference between Nietzsche and St. Paul. They want our blood, our treasure, our women, our nations. Sentimental Christians would hand everything over to them in the name of charity, and some sentimental pagans might do the same, admiring the vigor and persistence of the barbarians at the gates.



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# Epigrams

*by X.J. Kennedy*

*Invasion*

In pours the packaged tour. Before its menace
The Sistine Adam quails, while sinking Venice
Prefers slow drowning in the Adriatic
To shooting by a Kodak automatic.

*For a Friend To Whom He'd Sent His Book*

I wish you'd say, "What hopeless trash, you twit,"
And not "look forward soon to reading it."

*Testimonial*

Indulgent old Professor Puffer couldn't
Recognize in the street a former student,
Still, those who send him fervent word-libations
He praises grandly on their applications.

*At a Conference of Educators*

Do not accuse me of old-fashioned prurience
For wishing teenaged kids less "life experience."

*Casual Conversation*

In shirtsleeves, in a friendly game with God,
    The Devil shuffles, deals, and calls the action:
"They say, Sire, that Your animated clod
    Thinks You and me mere orders of abstraction."

*Psychoanalysis*

Ever since Freud struck pay dirt with his thesis
That in our dreams loose money stands for feces,
Down listening ears we pay to flush our woes
And pay. And keep on paying through the nose.

*Just a Suggestion*

Wars meant to end all wars breed and increase.
High time we tried a peace to end all peace.

*A Financier*

He died from eating dollar bills.
    And junk bonds. Sore distressed,
He thought himself, for all his ills,
    A safe place to invest.

*Vilma*

Vilma cries "Date rape" following a spat
With every date she's thrust her vulva at.

*Fiat Lux*

*Let there be light!* cried Thomas Alva Edison,
As though to let the Lord taste His own medicine,
But by and by the Lord, not One to flout,
Fingered the switch. And Edison went out.

*Proposal to the NEA*

Were I appointed Commissar of Grants,
I'd pay some poets not to write but dance.
Most who now print in *Seize-the-Trend Review*
I'd pack off to stay stoned in Katmandu,
But all who polished more than one good line
Till gray and toothless off the cuff might dine
While comely youths or nymphs, or well-trained gibbons,
Poured them champagne and changed their printer ribbons.



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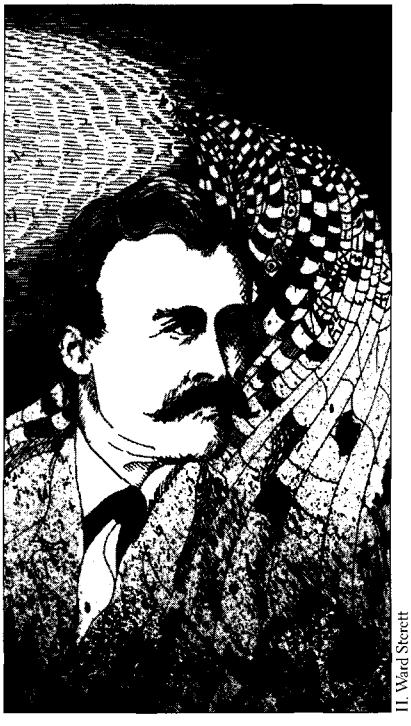
# With the Nietzscheans of Naumburg

by Curtis Cate



H. Ward Sterett

The old cathedral town of Naumburg, where Friedrich Nietzsche spent 12 of the first 18 and seven of the last ten years of his life, is located in the southeastern corner of the *Land* (province) of Sachsen-Anhalt, roughly halfway between Weimar and Leipzig. In late April and early May of 1945, this part of Germany was overrun by the fast-moving tanks of General Patton's Third Army. But the relief that many Saxons and Thuringians may have felt at being "liberated" from the Hitlerian yoke was short-lived; for two months later this entire area was evacuated by U.S. Army forces (against the advice of Winston Churchill), in accordance with the demarcation lines that had been proposed in London in 1944 and agreed to at the Yalta Conference of February 1945. Stalin and his goateed lackey, Walter Ulbricht, were thus able to impose their own totalitarian tyranny: one the hapless inhabitants of *Mitteldeutschland* were forced to endure for the next 44 years—which is to say, more than three times as long as the duration of the Nazi nightmare.

This helps to explain the "disturbingly high" percentage of votes (varying from 15 percent to 37 percent in different constituencies) cast by the inhabitants of the former DDR for the neocommunist PDS during the 1994 parliamentary elections. This was not, in my opinion, so much a vote in favor of the former, far-from-loved regime, as it was a vote of protest against the luckier and more prosperous West Germans, guilty, like the West in general, of having over the past five years "neglected" a population that had previously been left to fend for itself for more than four decades.

In August 1994, at a time when those parliamentary elections were no more than a tiny cloud on my horizon, I happened to read in a Swiss newspaper that more than 100 philosophers and philologists from various countries were preparing to converge on Naumburg to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Friedrich Nietzsche's birth (October 15, 1844). That this was going to tax the tourist facilities of a small provincial town of 30,000 souls did not overly surprise me. But what I had not anticipated was how difficult it would be to reach Naumburg for a Parisian not affluent enough to travel by air or car. I would have to take a night train as far as Magdeburg (a mere 100 kilometers southwest of Berlin), then head south toward the university town of Halle, and finally climb into a third train bound for the valley of the Saale. All went well as far as Halle. But there, after a chilling 40-minute wait on the still-mist-shrouded platform, we were informed over the loudspeaker that the "express" train we were waiting for had suffered an "accident." I am grateful, nonetheless, for the inconvenience thus caused. For in the *Bummelzug* (local), which made a dozen stops along the way, I had ample time to notice the run-down sheds, the broken window panes, the scrofulous brick walls from which the yellow-grey stucco was peeling away in scabs, and even the weeds sprouting between rusting railway tracks in station after station—lamentable symptoms of the disrepair into which Erich Honecker and his communist comrades had allowed the East German railway system (like that of Brezhnev's Soviet Union) to slide.

To the left, as we approached the old cathedral town, and

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clearly visible above the misty fields and the pale-green and yellow-leafed willows and poplars gently gilded by a vaporous sun, were the ruins of the Schönburg fortress, a robber baron's keep which the irate inhabitants of Naumburg had finally stormed centuries ago in order to secure free passage for the barges plying up and down the sluggish Saale River. One of Nietzsche's favorite haunts, it was here that in 1859 the young Friedrich founded a literary society (the "Germania") with his two friends, Gustav Krug and Wilhelm Pinder.

The bravely named "Deutscher Hof," to which I had been steered by a most cooperative *Fremdenverkehrsamt* (tourist office), turned out to be a partially reconverted cafe, which the owner, an already white-haired lady, was trying to turn into a hotel. The humble entrance was through a garage door, and the bedroom I was lucky to obtain (without a shower or toilet) was reached by a crude wooden staircase leading upward over the downfloor dining room tavern. Later Frau Schülke explained the gamble she had taken in 1982, when she and her family had decided to acquire this house. In Walter Ulbricht's and Erich Honecker's DDR, there was simply no room for small-scale tourism, which is why Naumburg, notwithstanding its world-famous cathedral, still boasts only four small hotels.

In 1850, when Nietzsche's recently widowed mother moved to Naumburg with her son "Fritz" and her daughter Elisabeth, the old cathedral town was still solidly protected by medieval ramparts. The creaking portals of its five towered gates were closed at 10 P.M. and not reopened until five o'clock the next morning, so that those venturing out in the evening had to hurry back before the closing time for fear of being shut out for the night. Of those towered gates only one—the dark-stoned, red-tiled Marientor, on the city's northern rim—has survived. The young Fritz could clearly see it from the upper-floor room he occupied in a nearby house, standing guard over a landscape that never ceased to delight him: an orchard full of fruit trees, with a poplar-lined highway stretching off across plowed lands or stubble toward the distant hillside vineyards, which make the Saale river-valley the northernmost wine-growing region in Germany.

Suburban houses now obstruct this once pleasant prospect—as they do the view one has from the wooden verandah of another, later *Nietzsche-Haus*, located at the southern end of the *Weingartenstrasse* (Vineyard Street), within yards of the dark-stoned remains of the medieval ramparts. This two-story corner house—Nietzsche's official "home" from the early 1860's until he left for Basel in 1869, and again, after his mental breakdown from 1890 to 1897—is for the time being little more than an empty shell. For shortly before their mother's death in 1897, Nietzsche's dreadful sister Elisabeth emptied the house of its furniture and, taking advantage of her brother's crippled state, transported the family's belongings, including all of Fritz's precious manuscripts, to Weimar. Undaunted, the town fathers of Naumburg have decided to turn this *Nietzsche-Haus* into a library as well as a museum: one which already boasts a fine collection of framed photographs of family members and of close university friends.

Any visitor to Naumburg's *Altstadt* is likely to be struck by the quantity of handsome doorways, with gracefully carved keystones, that are still to be seen, some dating from the 17th century. But I could not help noticing the ramshackle state of many inner courtyards, with broken windowpanes, rotting beamwork, and sagging eaves attesting to decades of impecunious neglect. Yet those 40 years of neglect may turn out to be a saving grace. For, though here and there one comes upon parked cars—Opels, Volkswagens, Citroens, Fiats, Nissans, and even an expensive BMW, next to a few rusty East German Trabants—the "insolent chariots" (as Lewis Mumford used to call them) have yet to wreak the havoc and congestion they have brought to so many other German cities and to ruin the pedestrian tranquillity of Naumburg's quaintly cobbled streets.

The old town's two principal attractions are its spacious *Marktplatz*, which is still used as a marketplace on Saturdays, and (for art lovers) the world-famous statues of its cathedral. Flanked on one side by a Renaissance *Rathaus* (town hall), the market square is bordered on two others by a number of tall-roofed burgher houses, whose delicately painted facades run a chromatic gamut from pearl-grey and pistachio green, from caramel yellow to a warm maroon. At the local tourist office, situated on the remaining side of the square, I was greeted with bewilderment when I asked in which of those fine houses Nietzsche's friends, Gustav Krug and Wilhelm Pinder, had once lived. *Keine Ahnung*! No idea! However, with the help of the "curator" of the *Nietzsche-Haus*, I finally located it in the northwest corner of the square: a handsome burgher house, with three superimposed tiers of dormer windows peeping out from the tall roof, whose ground floor now serves as a *Modehaus Fischer* (fashion-shop for women), next to the editorial offices of the *Naumburger Tageblatt*. First cousins, the meditative Wilhelm Pinder and the impetuous, violin-playing Gustav Krug were the grandsons of one of Naumburg's leading ladies, who maintained a literary salon. Krug's father, a jurist attached to the Royal Court of Appeals, was an accomplished musician and a personal friend of Mendelssohn, and so beautifully could he play on his magnificent grand piano that the young Friedrich Nietzsche, who from the age of two onward had displayed a precocious taste for music, would often stand outside in the street, rooted to the spot by the "sublime" sound of Beethoven chords pouring out from the open window.

The *Domgymnasium* (cathedral high school), to which the ten-year-old Fritz was admitted in 1854, along with his friends Wilhelm and Gustav, was then located in several gloomy classrooms overlooking the cloister, near the entrance to the cathedral. No one but a Nietzsche "fan" would want to waste a minute glancing up at the school's narrow dormer-windows, jutting out from the cloistral roof, for the main attraction is elsewhere. Not, as I had fondly imagined, adorning the western facade—like the statues at Chartres, Notre Dame, or Reims—but inside the cathedral, in a curious chapel (regarded as a second "choir"), separated from the austere nave by an extraordinary rood-screen.

In all of my visits to chapels, churches, and cathedrals, I cannot offhand recall ever having been so struck, as here, by the extraordinary contrast presented by the two inherently contradictory aspects of Christianity. On the one hand, the naive faith and tribulations of the humble disciples, wonderfully portrayed by a master-craftsman in a series of dramatic scenes spread across the rood-screen—the Last Supper, Iscariot collecting his 30 talents of silver, the Judas kiss in the garden of Gethsemane, Peter's rage in hacking off Malchus's ear with a sword, and his subsequent, early-dawn ("Before the cock crow thrice") repudiations of Christ. And then, once one has stepped through the sculpted rood-screen under one of the outstretched arms of the crucified Christ, the deliberate elevation (a dozen feet above the chapel floor) of Naumburg's aris-



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tocratic founders represented by a sorrowing Countess Gerburg, a bashful Markgrave Hermann and his blooming Polish wife, Reglindis, a cringing Count Tyzzo of Thuringia, an angry Count Wilhelm, a masterful Markgrave Ekkehard and his lovely wife, Uta.

In *The Story of Art*, Ernst Gombrich added this comment below a reproduction of the determined Ekkehard (shown rolling up the sleeve of his sword-gripping arm) and of Uta (whose invisible right hand is shown raising the collar of her cloak, out of modesty or perhaps to shield her cheek from a cruel wind):

> The sculptor who was given the task of representing the founders of Naumburg Cathedral in Germany, round about 1260, almost convinces us that he portrayed actual knights of his time. . . . It is not very likely that he really did—these founders had been dead many years, and were nothing but a name to him. But his statues of men and women seem to have come to life under his hands. They look immensely energetic and vigorous—the true contemporaries of Simon of Montfort.

What was here precociously emerging was the "realism" or "naturalism" that was to blossom forth several centuries later. This was something that Nietzsche, an admirer of the "glorious" Renaissance who regarded the Middle Ages as a period of intellectual aberration dominated by deceptive, otherworldly fantasies from which the European had to be rescued in order to become "adult," should normally have recognized. But I cannot recall his ever having mentioned those 12 extraordinary statues in any of his letters or published works. Being extremely shortsighted and obliged to wear glasses, he may never have looked at them closely. Indeed, those statues do not seem to have attracted much attention until the 1920's, when an enterprising photographer, Walter Hegger, using a stepladder and floodlights, for the first time "revealed" these masterpieces of "Expressionistic" art. Overnight these epic figures were transformed into models of Germanic virility, nobility (and also cowardice) in a wave of books, novels, and even plays, which became a flood during the "heroic" years of the Third Reich. (Needless to say, the same epic figures were even more rapidly "demoted" during the ensuing 44 years of the Ulbricht-Honecker tyranny.)

For the weak-sighted Nietzsche, Naumburg's cathedral was much less a repository of splendid statuary than a temple of celestial sound. From his piano-playing father he had inherited a gift for music, and one of the first things his widowed mother did when they moved from the rural vicarage of Röcken to Naumburg was to entrust the young Fritz to the tutelage of the finest pianist in the city (a woman, as it happened). The director of the cathedral choir was a first-rate musician named Wettig, whose wife, a former opera singer, contributed greatly to the success of their recitals. From the somber classrooms of the *Domgymnasium* it was but a step to the cathedral nave, into whose echoing semidarkness the young Nietzsche would creep to listen to the soaring voices. The impression made on him by the *Dies irae* and the heavenly benediction of Mozart's *Requiem*, during the autumn rehearsals leading up to All Saints' Day, was so overpowering that it penetrated "to the very marrow of my bones," as he later described it, and the same feeling of something ineffably sublime came over him again while listening to Handel's *Judas Makkabeus* and Haydn's *Creation*.

Of one thing the young Nietzsche was fully aware—his "Polish" ancestry. Naumburg's founders—Ekkehard and other members of his family—were the *Markgrafen* (military commanders) of the Germanic border region of Jena. During the last decades of the 11th century, they were encouraged by two emperors—Otto I and Otto II—to advance the limits of the Germanic Empire eastward into territory then inhabited by Slavs. This they did by founding a "new town" (Neu-burg, later Naumburg) near the confluence of the Unstrut and Saale rivers. This phase of the Germanic *Drang nach Osten* probably explains the establishment of a rival church, the *Wenzelskirche*, dedicated to the memory of a Slavic saint—the "good King Wenzelaus" of Bohemia, whose wintry hospitality we used to celebrate in our Christmas carols. Here, as elsewhere in East Germany, the Slavic "underdogs" have survived to this day: one proof of it being the family name of the present-day owners of the Townhall's *Ratskeller*, Chlebnicek (derived from *khleb*, the Slavic word for "bread"). The name Nietzsche, too, has Slavic roots, being linked to the *icki* suffix of the Poles, to the *ice* (pronounced "itse") of the Czechs, and to the Germanized *itz* one finds in Leibniz, Tirpitz, and Willamowitz.

This sociological duality was given graphic expression by the sculptor who carved the Naumburg *Rathaus*'s picturesquely painted doorway—blue, black, and rust-red pillars, yellow lions, etc. It is dominated by the two armorial crests of the city's patron saints: that of Wenzelaus, patron saint of the (partly Slavic) *Burgerstadt*, and that of Peter and Paul, adopted early on by the patrician bishops of Naumburg, who for centuries protected the cathedral with a separate wall.

It was in a spacious, well-lit hall inside this 16th-century *Rathaus* that a Martin Heidegger *Gesellschaft* of Halle University had decided to hold a four-day Philological Congress to honor the 150th anniversary of the birth of Naumburg's most illustrious (though often absent) "son." The mere fact that a Martin Heidegger Society should have been established in Halle (formerly part of the Ulbricht-Honecker *Stasi*-state), so soon after the collapse of the Iron Curtain, pays tribute to the energy with which certain Germans are pursuing the spiritual "reconquest" or "recolonization" of the East.

Of the lectures delivered during those four days, everything from Nietzsche's "thinking poetry" to his interpretation of the Epicurean tradition—I will say nothing here. However, I am not sure that Nietzsche would have been thrilled to see his philosophy put through the abstruse, ontological wringer of Heideggerian analysis. For if there is one constant to be found in Nietzsche's philosophical writings, it is surely an emphasis on *das Werden* (the process of Becoming) rather than on a Parmenidean *Sein* (Being or Essence). Whence his marked preference for Heraclitus, the philosopher of change and flux, and his hostility to Plato and his immutable "universals."

I was surprised by the number of young German boys and girls—some of them dressed in jeans (*O tempora, o mores*!)—who flocked into the upstairs *Rathaus* hall, capable of seating 400. But when I commented on this to one of the participants, he laughed: "Don't worry, not all of these young folk are really interested in philosophy. They've simply come here out of curiosity to see how one celebrates a 150th birthday anniversary."

I was even more surprised to learn from a professor of theology at Göttingen that his faculty numbered 400 undergraduate students, and that at Erlangen University the figure was close to 1,000. When I asked him what, as a theologian, his own posi-



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tion was with regard to the priest- and clergy-hating author of *The Antichrist*, he confessed that he had first stumbled on Nietzsche at the age of 16 and had been so enthralled by what he read that he had remained fascinated ever since. "It's easy, though often useless, to argue with an ordinary atheist," he explained. "But to tackle Nietzsche is an intellectual challenge. Indeed, it's what I tell my students: no one is worthy of becoming a theologian who has not met this challenge."

As a special treat we were offered a bus ride to nearby Schulpforte: the boarding school where Nietzsche (its 10,544th student) spent six studious years (1858-1864), most of them at the head of his class. I would frankly have preferred to have made the four-kilometer pilgrimage on foot, as the young Fritz used to do, often coming out on Sunday as far as the midway point of Almrich to meet his mother and his sister; but this was a guided tour, and had I trudged out alone, I would almost certainly have been denied admittance.

Originally a Cistercian monastery bearing the Latin name of *Porta coeli* (Gate of Heaven), Pforta was transformed in 1543 into a Lutheran *Prinzenschule* by the Prince-Elector Spritz of Saxony, who had first sided with Emperor Charles V (the Catholic "Defender of the Faith") and had then helped to defeat him at Innsbruck, shortly before the convening of the Council of Trent. In Nietzsche's day, when it numbered 12 resident teachers and 180 boarders, it was generally regarded as the foremost preparatory school for classical studies in Germany. Times have changed, but not apparently the lofty ideals of its founders and successive rectors; for though it was recently expanded from 150 to 350 boarders—almost half of them are girls . . . would Nietzsche have approved? I wonder—the present headmaster emphasized the fact that during their four years of schooling every boarder must master four foreign languages, including Latin. Tuition is free, now generously provided by the *Land* of Sachsen-Anhalt. Greek is no longer compulsory, which I personally find a pity; but instruction in Hebrew is available for students particularly interested in biblical studies.

Inside the venerable walls we were soberly recalled to order by a bust of Johann Gottlieb Fichte (a Pforta student from 1774 to 1780), accompanied by the words: "*Gross und glücklicil wäre der Meister, der alle seine Schüler grösser machen könnte als er selbst war.*" ("Great and happy would be the Master who could make his pupils greater than he himself was.") One of the humblest and most moving exhortations to scholastic excellence I have ever encountered.

We were led past an impressive photographic display of eminent Pforta graduates—the poet Klopstock, the historian Leopold von Ranke, the great classicist Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, author of a blistering critique of *The Birth of Tragedy*—into the old library. Its 80,000 volumes—including priceless first editions of works by Galileo and Copernicus—miraculously escaped the predatory ravages of Nazi "art collectors," Soviet pillagers, and Marxist detesters of antiquity. Stacked all the way to the ceiling on eight successive bookshelves, the ancient tomes—many of them gratefully bequeathed by deceased graduates or teachers—were quite visibly present, even though "off-limits" to ordinary Pforta students, who are offered a smaller "working library" of 30,000 books. (Incredible as it may sound, each Pfortensian is expected to "consult" 4,000 different books during his or her four years of schooling.)

On the eve of Nietzsche's birthday anniversary, the symposium's prime mover, Professor Manfred Riedel, formerly of Erlangen and now of Halle University, decided to stage an informal press conference in an upper chamber of Naumburg's Town Hall. Some pipsqueak of a journalist had accused him of being a fascist—for having dared to set up a Martin Heidegger *Gesellschaft* in once East German Halle and to have compounded this "provocation" by now honoring Nietzsche. Short, balding, bespectacled, the smiling professor wanted the half-dozen newshounds to know that, though he had used the word *Herrschaft* ("rule" or "dominion") and had spoken of his *Ubermenschen* as destined to become *die Herrn der Welt* (Lords of the World), Nietzsche could not in any sense be regarded as a pre- or proto-Nazi. I chimed in to say that Bismarck was one of Nietzsche's *bêtes noires* and that toward the end of his creative life he was thinking of launching one more thunderbolt, aimed this time at the Second (Wilhelmian) Reich. "Besides," I added, "Nietzsche hated the masses"—a reference to Hitler's Brownshirts.

> This kind of riskless world—excoriated by Nietzsche as soft, flabby, and corrupting—is precisely the kind of mushy, pulpous world in which we now find ourselves.

"No, not the masses," Riedel corrected me. "Simply those who use, exploit, and mislead them." After which he returned to his favorite theme—one he had stressed during previous debates—to the effect that Nietzsche had always been the enemy of a caste, whether priestly or other, that the very notion of "caste" was an Oriental concept, dear to India and ancient China, whereas Nietzsche in his thinking had always been a European. Ah, how difficult it is to defend Nietzsche against himself! For was it not Nietzsche who wrote in one of his last works, *Der Antichrist* (which in German has the double meaning of "The Anti-Christ" or "The Anti-Christian"): "The organization of castes, the supreme, dominating law, is merely the sanction of a natural order [*Natur-Ordnung* in German], of a Nature-Lawfulness of the first rank, over which no arbitrary whim, no 'modern idea' has any force"? And even if the "artists" preordained to rule us include thinkers as well as poets and composers, what guarantee is there that they would prove any wiser and more competent to govern the restless masses than the poetry-condemning Guardians of Plato's Republic? Alas, none.

André Malraux liked to say that the 20th century had proved Nietzsche right and Karl Marx wrong in predicting that it would be a century of violence and warfare, not one of the messianic triumph of the proletariat and the magical withering away of the state. But there are at least three other



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respects in which Nietzsche's preoccupations have immense relevance for the present.

The first was his prophetic vision of the quagmire of putrescent mediocrity into which Western "civilization" was going to be sucked down by a rampaging egalitarianism and an equally unbridled "liberalism" (the cult of freedom, elevated to the status of an absolute, as opposed to relative, value). As he put it in his *Götzen-Dämmerung* (*The Twilight of the Idols*): "Liberal institutions cease to be liberal as soon as they are attained: later on there are no worse and no more thorough injurers of freedom than liberal institutions . . . they level mountain and valley, make men small, cowardly, and hedonistic—every time it is the herd-animal that triumphs with them. Liberalism: in other words, herd-animalization."

Secondly, all of Nietzsche's writings, from *Human, All Too Human* on, were aimed at propagating a joyous acceptance of life as it is—whence his notion of *Fatum*—as opposed to a life spent in anxious dread of an implacable Final Judgment, or in the petty, beggarly, vainglorious expectation of an otherworldly reward for piety on earth in an imaginary eternity.

Well, whether we like it or not, this has come to be the way of the world—more specifically of the Western world—in which we live. Some are still willing to pay lip service to those terrifying or exalting myths by going to church for an hour or two on Sunday—more would be an intolerable inconvenience—but for the vast number of persons in the West, notions like the Final Judgment, Eternal Damnation and hellfire, and a Heaven peopled with angels are either ignored or regarded as quaint inheritances from the past, which can occasionally serve a useful purpose in promoting pre-Christmas sales.

Recently I read an article in the Paris daily *Le Monde*, written by the head of a Muslim community in Switzerland. It was a plea for tolerance and understanding on the part of the nonbelievers of a largely godless *société laïque* for those, like himself, who take their faith seriously. He was right. This conflict between ardent believers and casual agnostics is already with us, and I am far from certain that it can be peacefully resolved.

And, third, we live in a frantic world increasingly dominated by Dionysian frenzy: orgiastic dances (more exactly jerks, twists, and contortions), endlessly pounding music, violent action, and emotional hysteria exhibited on stages, stadiums, and screens. I am far from certain that Nietzsche, confronted with such convulsions, would have appreciated this "eternal return" of basic instincts, since to normal lusts have now been added the soft perversions of vicarious pleasures, indulged in by hundreds of millions of tabloid-consuming smuthounds and television-watching voyeurs.

On the train that was taking me to Naumburg, I happened to read John Lukacs' article "To Hell With Culture," published in the September 1994 issue of *Chronicles*. With almost every word of this devastating indictment of our increasingly uncivilized society, I fully agree—except (truly a minor caveat) for his use of the word "sin" in speaking of "the decay of privacy—and of a sense of sin (that sense of sin without which sex tastes like egg without salt)." I would frankly have preferred "risk" here, instead of "sin," since it is more all-embracing and not limited to a specified moral context.

One of the "superhuman" tasks Nietzsche set himself was the search for a new ethos from which the crippling notion of sinfulness would be totally banished—which is essentially what his spiritual heir, Freud, set out to do by attacking the "guilt complex." This is what Nietzsche meant with his most parlous exhortations—*Lebe kühn*! . . . *gefährlich leben*—"Live boldly, dangerously!" Without this element of risk, love and even sex loses its passionate intensity. Without this element of risk—to move for a moment to a higher plane—Héloïse's fateful passion for Abélard, Tristan's for Isolde, or Juliet's for Romeo could never have been lived or imagined.

This kind of riskless world—excoriated by Nietzsche as soft, flabby, and corrupting—is precisely the kind of mushy, pulpous world in which we now find ourselves condemned to live in the name of a shameless sentimentalism that knows no bounds. At the Magdeburg railway station, where, on my way home, I had a long wait before being able to board the Berlin-Paris express, I made a visit to the men's room. As I walked out, I noticed, attached to the wall, a long glass box, like a slot-machine offering various kinds of chewing gum or candy. Cosmopolitan to a degree, as befits our "new Europe," the ten brands on display were all boldly advertised as "Condoms" and bore lovely names: "Long love," "Rose d'armour," "Black is my love," etc. ©

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## Best Intentions

*by X.J. Kennedy*

Guilt has an attic packed with things undone,
    Old friends ignored, the months-unwritten letter,
Duties we'd sooner shrink from than confront,
    But won't let go. The new year will be better,

We tell ourselves. And yet remain inert,
    Watching our best intentions by the minute
Incubate mildew like a dirty shirt,
    An outgrown bassinet, mice nesting in it.



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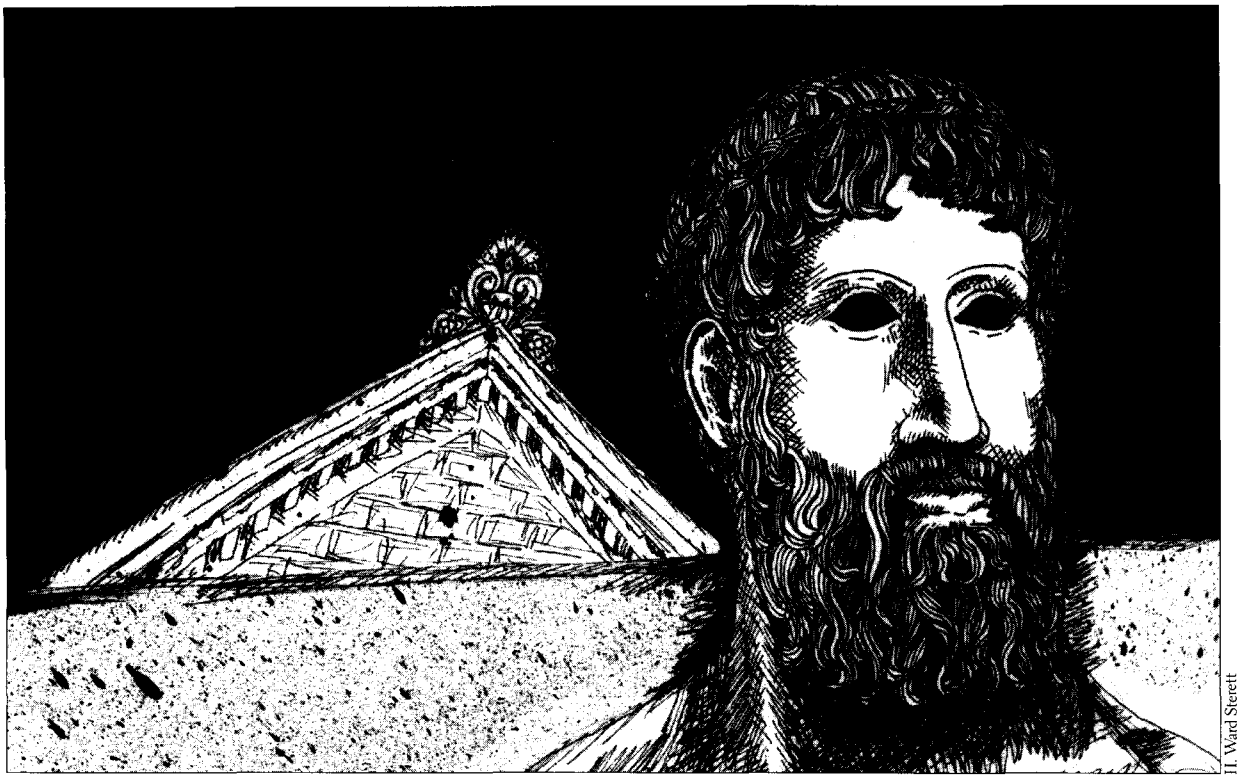
# Ancient Greek Religion

by Sir Hugh Lloyd-Jones



H. Ward Sterett

The religion of the ancient Greeks is startlingly different from Christianity. It has been misinterpreted by people who think that since it is a religion it must be like Christianity, and also by people who think that because it is not like Christianity it is not really a religion at all. The Greeks had poetry that was thought to contain information about the gods, but they had no sacred books that communicated a divine revelation or pronounced dogmas in the authoritative tones of those who claim divine authority for their statements. They had oracles and prophets, official expounders of cult regulations, and priests who were in charge of temples and administered cults, but they had no priesthood in the sense of a clerisy or a church sanctioned by divine authority. In consequence, they had none of the theological disputes, schisms, and religious wars which have been so noticeable a feature of the history of Christianity.

Gods as well as men were ruled by the old Indo-European sky-god, whom the Greeks called Zeus. But there were many gods, and certain principal ones stood out. During the classical period, it became customary to speak of "the 12 gods," meaning the 12 principal gods. But there were many minor as well as major ones, and new gods could be added to their number. Certain figures of mythology, who were regarded as heroes and thought to be descended from gods, were accorded a form of worship different from that of the gods.

Part of our knowledge of early Greek religion derives from poetry and art; but another part of it derives from prose texts, and in particular from documents relating to cult observances that have been preserved on stone. These different kinds of sources present different aspects of religion, and to a superficial view they seem to present different pictures.

In the earliest Greek poetry that we possess, the great epics of Homer and the *Theogony* of Hesiod, which names and describes the gods, the gods live together on Mount Olympus under the presidency of Zeus. These gods have not existed since the beginning of time; the first ruler of the gods, Uranus (Heaven) was displaced by his son Kronos, and Kronos was displaced by his son Zeus, who with his brothers, sisters, sons, and daughters was in historic times held to be supreme. They are distinguished from one another by their attributes and functions; thus they form a coherent system in which each deity has his or her special place and relation to the others. Hera is the consort of Zeus and the patroness of marriage; myth portrays her as a jealous wife, resentful of the many unions with goddesses and mortal women which the need for gods and heroes to trace descent from Zeus compels her husband to contract. She is the mother of the craftsman god, Hephaestus, and the war-god Ares; but these two, the one because of his deformity and the other because of his violence and stupidity, are not as highly regarded as some other gods. Hera is not the mother of her husband's two most important children, Athena and Apollo.

The virgin Athena is the goddess of wisdom, the patroness of women's work and other crafts, but also a war-goddess more effective than Ares; she was produced by Zeus without a mother. She is the special patroness of Athens, which probably derived its name from her, but she is important in other cities too, including Sparta. Apollo with his sister Artemis, the virgin huntress, is the son of Zeus by Leto, who has no function except that of being their mother; both are archers, but Apollo, lord of the great shrines of Delphi and Delos, is a god of

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prophecy, a patron of poetry, music, and healing. Only on rare occasions is he said to be a sun god; the sun and the moon belong to minor divinities, Helios and Selene. Hermes, the messenger of the gods, is the son of Zeus by a minor goddess, the nymph Maia. Aphrodite, the goddess of love, is the daughter of Zeus by an obscure deity, Dione. Zeus' brother Poseidon is lord of the sea, as well as the cause of earthquakes and the lord of horses. Another brother, Hades or Pluto, is the lord of the underworld. Zeus' sister Demeter, an underworld goddess and responsible for the growth of crops, is the mother of Persephone, the consort of Hades; the mother and daughter preside over the great shrine of Eleusis. The most complicated of the immortals, Dionysus, is usually called the son of Zeus by a mortal princess, Semele, and to begin with had difficulty in establishing his claim to be a major god; he is the god of wine and of ecstasy and the patron of drama. Note that these gods stand for forces that can be seen working in the world.

> Plato denounced the immorality of the gods portrayed by Homer and the other poets; revolting against the traditional view that a man proved himself by his ability to benefit his friends and harm his enemies, he created an ethics that had much in common with that of Christianity.

The myths that provided the early poets with their subject-matter show how the gods dealt with each other and with mortals. Men were created not by a ruler of the gods, but by Prometheus, a minor god belonging to the generation displaced by Zeus and his family. The gods rule the universe for themselves, and men have only a minor share of their attention and consideration. Like mortal heroes, the gods care intensely about honor; they demand that men shall honor them. After death the spirits of men lead a shadowy existence in the underworld, in the house of Hades. But the gods have certain favorites among mortals, who in myth are always descended from the liaisons of the gods with mortal men or women, and also favorites among mortal communities.

One god may clash with another; thus in the legend of the Trojan War, Troy is protected by Apollo, Artemis, Ares, and Aphrodite, but is the hated enemy of Hera, Athena, and Poseidon. Zeus is partial to the Trojans, but in the end his partiality is bound to be overcome by the insistence of Hera and Athena. In the *Odyssey* the return of the hero Odysseus is held up by the enmity of Poseidon, but is finally achieved through the support of Athena, who as Zeus' favorite daughter has enormous power. The great hero Heracles must contend with the enmity of Hera, always hostile to Zeus' bastards, but he is protected by Athena. By paying too much honor to one god, one can antagonize another; in Euripides' play *Hippolytus*, the hero's devotion to the virgin huntress Artemis brings upon him the hatred of Aphrodite, the goddess of love. From the aesthetic point of view, this religion has particular advantages; these gods and the myths about them have provided ideal subjects for literature and art, contrasting favorably, it may be thought, with some other religions in this respect.

In the world as it is depicted in early Greek poetry, the will of Zeus always prevails. Although in general the gods care more about their honor than about justice, Zeus is the protector of Dike, the minor goddess who represented justice, and punishes men's crimes against each other. But since the Greeks, like the ancient Hebrews, could observe that the wicked often flourished like green bay trees, Zeus' wrath often fell not upon the offender, but upon the latter's descendants. Zeus was thought to punish crimes against strangers and also suppliants, persons who by an act of submission placed themselves under his protection. But the will of Zeus, like that of other gods, was inscrutable to mortals, who did not live long enough to perceive the working of his justice. Through oracles or through prophets, men might get particles of knowledge from the gods, but this knowledge was thought to be misinterpreted by them. Despite Zeus' general care for justice, this religion makes it easier to understand why the world is as it is than does a monotheistic religion whose god cares deeply about men, his own creation, and who is altogether good.

So far we have been concerned with Greek religion as it appears in myth. But when we consider the evidence regarding cult and worship in historic times, we find what seems at first a different picture. This kind of evidence takes us nearer to the religion's origins. The origin of religion is always an obscure subject, and its investigation must be to a certain extent speculative. But it would appear that this religion began with the fear of ghosts; that would explain the importance of the cult of the dead, known from the discovery of tombs to have existed from an early time. After the fear of ghosts will have come the fear of powerful spirits, needing to be placated by offerings, and above all by sacrifice. In the time before the introduction of pasturage and agriculture, a time which has so far been much the longest period of human history, the life of a community depended on the group of male hunters, who disappeared for long stays in the jungle, the abode not only of their game, but of dangerous animals and formidable spirits. Such a spirit will have been the goddess known to the students of the earliest known period of Greek religion as "The Mistress of Animals." To get their food the hunters had to kill creatures that belonged to her; they had to placate her by giving her back part of its body. Here we have the origin of the sacrifices that were a central feature of Greek religion. But in historic times it was domestic animals, creatures precious to the human community, that were sacrificed to the gods. Not all offerings took the form of blood sacrifices; many were libations of various liquids, a few were holocausts; but blood sacrifice was the most important, and it continued to be offered to the gods of the community right through the history of Greek religion.



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In the beginning, the cults centered upon the sanctuaries of the gods seem to have been under private control, in the hands of certain families. In historic times, they belonged to the community, whose welfare was thought to depend on them. Monotheism may well be older than polytheism; it seems that to begin with each community tended to have its special deity. Thus Hera was the great divinity of Argos and of Samos, just as Apollo with his sister Artemis was the great divinity of the sanctuaries of Delphi and of Delos; Athena was the great divinity of Athens, though she had a strong rival in Poseidon. But gradually certain gods acquired an importance that went beyond the localities in which their cults had first developed; thus the early poets depict the gods as living together on Mount Olympus, where each had his or her separate dwelling.

The gods of heaven are distinguished from the gods of earth; in Homer there is very little about Demeter and other earth deities, and offerings to them took a different form from those made to the gods of heaven. Zeus is the father of Demeter's daughter Persephone, but there is mention of a Zeus of the underworld, who is equated with Hades. Originally Demeter the mother and Persephone the daughter were only different forms of the same being; originally the great god of the underworld was the consort of the earth goddess. Demeter's temple at Eleusis near Athens was the center of the earliest and most important mystery cult; those who were initiated into her mysteries were believed to obtain certain privileges in the world of the dead. During the sixth century B.C., we first hear of Orpheus, the mythical poet who was supposed to be the author of poems that told a strange story of the birth of Dionysus. He was the child of Persephone by her father Zeus, but was captured and eaten by evil spirits belonging to an earlier generation of the gods, the Titans. But his heart was rescued by Athena and given to Zeus, who then had intercourse with Semele and after her incineration himself gave Dionysus a second birth. The Titans were consumed by fire, and men sprang from their ashes; they were thus a mixture of the evil nature of the Titans and the divine nature of Dionysus. Through Dionysus initiates in the mysteries could attain not eternal life, but a privileged existence in the grave. But it is essential to remember that this kind of belief was current only within a restricted circle, and its theology never became generally accepted. Nor is there any evidence for the once-prevalent belief that the worship of the deities of earth came earlier than that of the deities of heaven, or that a matriarchal phase preceded a patriarchal phase.

The worship of the gods was closely bound up with the social structure of all early Greek communities. Often they were worshiped in splendid temples, some of which, like those at Athens, Delphi, and Olympia, have left notable remains. Festivals in their honor were observed at regular intervals, and played an important part in the life of the communities; people came from far off to visit great religious centers, like the sanctuaries of Zeus and Olympia in the Peloponnesus and Dodona in Epirus, of Apollo at Delphi and in the island of Delos, of Athena at Athens. The four great contests in which athletes from all Greek cities competed were celebrated every four years at Olympia and Delphi, and every two years at the shrine of Zeus at Nemea in the Argolid and at that of Poseidon at the Isthmus of Corinth.

Religious dissent found expression as early as the sixth century B.C., when the poet Xenophanes of Colophon wrote that if animals were to worship gods, they would worship gods with the shape of animals, and complained of the immoral behavior with which the gods were credited in myth. Early philosophical thinkers tended to monotheism, perhaps under the influence of the monotheistic religions of Asia Minor. But persecution for blasphemy or heresy was rare; prosecutions for atheism were grounded on the danger that it might alienate the gods who protected the community, and such prosecutions usually occurred only when the persons prosecuted had given offense in other ways. The Greek gods, unlike some other gods, could take a joke; in the special context of the comedies produced in fifth-century Athens, gods could be made fun of without anyone taking offense. Poets occasionally read the gods, and Zeus in particular, a lecture regarding their injustice in failing to reward good and punish evil.

But after the fifth century, philosophy distanced itself more and more from traditional religion. Plato denounced the immorality of the gods portrayed by Homer and the other poets; revolting against the traditional view that a man proved himself by his ability to benefit his friends and harm his enemies, he created an ethics that had much in common with that of Christianity. He did not wish to suppress the worship of the traditional gods, but they played no part in his philosophy. Aristotle's ethics had more in common with traditional Greek views than those of Plato, but even to Aristotle the traditional gods meant little more than they would later mean to Epicurus. To highly educated people, philosophy came to take much the kind of place that religion occupied for such people before the 19th century. But the worship of the gods and the observation of their cults continued for 800 years after Plato, and were terminated only by the barbarous Christian emperor Theodosius I, at the end of the fourth century after Christ. ◁©

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## Out of Tune with the Stars

*by X.J. Kennedy*

Our stars today forecast
A doleful horoscope:
To dwell on sorrow past,
Denied all hope of hope,

But blood in us demurs.
We opt for ecstasy,
Out of tune with the stars
And well content to be.



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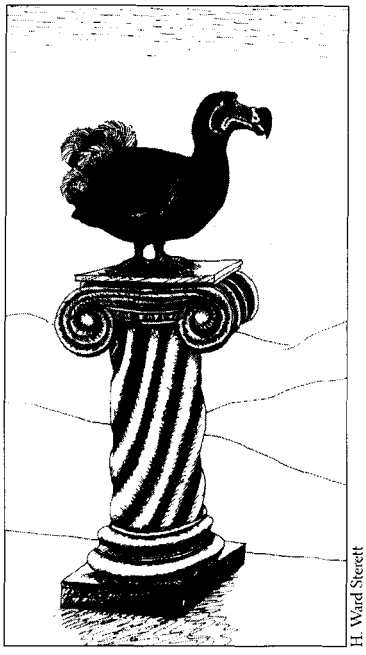
# Monotheism vs. Polytheism

by Alain de Benoist


H. Ward Sterett

Can we still conceive of the revival of pagan sensibility in an age so profoundly saturated by Judeo-Christian monotheism and so ardently adhering to the tenets of liberal democracy? In popular parlance the very word "paganism" may incite some to derision and laughter. Who, after all, wants to be associated with witches and witchcraft, with sorcery and black magic? Worshiping animals or plants, or chanting hymns to Wotan or Zeus, in an epoch of cable television and "smart weapons," does not augur well for serious intellectual and academic inquiry. Yet, before we begin to heap scorn on paganism, we should pause for a moment. Paganism is not just witches and witches' brew; paganism also means a mix of highly speculative theories and philosophies. Paganism is Seneca and Tacitus; it is an artistic and cultural movement that swept over Italy under the banner of the Renaissance. Paganism also means Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, Charles Darwin, and a host of other thinkers associated with the Western cultural heritage. Two thousand years of Judeo-Christianity have not obscured the fact that pagan thought has not yet disappeared, even though it has often been blurred, stifled, or persecuted by monotheistic religions and their secular offshoots. Undoubtedly, many would admit that in the realm of ethics all men and women of the world are the children of Abraham. Indeed, even the bolder ones who somewhat self-righteously claim to have rejected the Christian or Jewish theologies, and who claim to have replaced them with "secular humanism," frequently ignore that their self-styled secular beliefs are firmly grounded in Judeo-Christian ethics. Abraham and Moses may be dethroned today, but their moral edicts and spiritual ordinances are much alive. The global and disenchanted world, accompanied by the litany of human rights, ecumenical society, and the rule of law—are these not principles that can be traced directly to the Judeo-Christian messianism that resurfaces today in its secular version under the elegant garb of modern "progressive" ideologies?

And yet, we should not forget that the Western world did not begin with the birth of Christ. Neither did the religions of ancient Europeans see the first light of the day with Moses—in the desert. Nor did our much-vaunted democracy begin with the period of Enlightenment or with the proclamation of American independence. Democracy and independence—all of this existed in ancient Greece, albeit in its own unique social and religious context. Our Greco-Roman ancestors, our predecessors who roamed the woods of central and northern Europe, also believed in honor, justice, and virtue, although they attached to these notions a radically different meaning. Attempting to judge, therefore, ancient European political and religious manifestations through the lens of our ethnocentric and reductionist glasses could mean losing sight of how much we have departed from our ancient heritage, as well as forgetting that modern intellectual epistemology and methodology have been greatly influenced by the Bible. Just because we profess historical optimism—or believe in the progress of the modern "therapeutic state"—does not necessarily mean that our society is indeed the "best of all worlds." Who knows, with the death of communism, with the exhaustion of liberalism, with the visible depletion of the congregations in churches and synagogues, we may be witnessing the dawn of neopaganism, a new blossoming of old cultures, a return to the roots that are directly tied to our ancient European precursors. Who can dispute the fact that Athens was the homeland of Europeans before Jerusalem became their frequently painful edifice?

Great lamenting is heard from all quarters of our disenchanted and barren world today. Gods seem to have departed, as Nietzsche predicted a century ago, ideologies are dead, and liberalism hardly seems capable of providing man with endur-

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ing spiritual support. Maybe the time has come to search for other paradigms? Perhaps the moment is ripe, as Alain de Benoist would argue, to envision another cultural and spiritual revolution—a revolution that might well embody our pre-Christian European pagan heritage?

—*Tomislav Sunic*

Nietzsche well understood the meaning of "Athens against Jerusalem." Referring to ancient paganism, which he called "the greatest utility of polytheism," he wrote in *The Joyful Wisdom*:

> There was then only one norm, *the man* and every people believed that it *had* this one and ultimate norm. But, above himself, and outside of himself, in a distant overworld a person could see a *multitude of norms: the one God was not the denial or blasphemy of the other Gods!* It was here that the right of individuals was first respected. The inventing of Gods, heroes, and supermen of all kinds, as well as co-ordinate men and undermen—dwarfs, fairies, centaurs, satyrs, demons, devils—was the inestimable preliminary to the justification of the selfishness and sovereignty of the individual: the freedom which was granted to one God in respect to other Gods, was at last given to the individual himself in respect to laws, customs, and neighbors. Monotheism, on the contrary, the rigid consequence of *one normal* human being—consequently, the belief in a normal God, beside whom there are only false spurious Gods—has perhaps been the greatest danger of mankind in the past.

Jehovah is not only a "jealous" god, but he can also show hatred: "Yet, I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau" (Malachi 1:3). He recommends hatred to all those who call out his name: "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies" (Psalm 139: 21-22). "Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God" (Psalm 139:19). Jeremiah cries out: "Render unto them a recompense, O Lord, according to the work of their hands. . . . Persecute and destroy them in anger from under the heavens of the Lord" (Lamentations 3:64-66). The book of Jeremiah is a long series of maledictions and curses hurled against peoples and nations. His contemplation of future punishments fills him with gloomy delight. "Let them be confounded that persecute me, but let not me be confounded: . . . bring upon them the day of evil, and destroy them with double destruction" (Lam. 17:18). "Therefore deliver up their children to the famine, and pour out their blood by the force of the sword; and let their wives be bereaved of their children, and *be* widows; and let their men be put to death" (Lam. 18: 21).

Further, Jehovah promises the Hebrews that he will support them in their war efforts: "When the Lord thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land" (Deuteronomy 12:29). "But of the cities of these people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth" (Deut. 20:16). Jehovah himself gave an example of a genocide by provoking the Deluge against the humanity that sinned against him. While he resided with the Philistine King Achish, David also practiced genocide (1 Samuel 27:9). Moses organized the extermination of the Midian people (Numbers 31:7). Joshua massacred the inhabitants of Hazor and Anakim. "And Joshua at that time turned back, and took Hazor, and smote the king thereof with the sword: for Hazor beforetime was the head of all those kingdoms. And they smote all the souls that were therein with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them: there was not any left to breathe: and he burnt Hazor with fire" (Joshua 11:10-11, 20-21). The messianic king extolled by Solomon was also known for his reign of terror: "May he purify Jerusalem for all gentiles who trample on it miserably, may he exterminate by his wisdom, justice the sinners of this country. . . . May he destroy the impious nations with the words from his mouth." Hatred against pagans is also visible in the books of Esther, Judith, etc.

"No ancient religion, except that of the Hebrew people has known such a degree of intolerance," says Emile Gillabert in *Moise et le phénomène judéo-chrétien* (1976). Renan had written in similar terms: "The intolerance of the Semitic peoples is the inevitable consequence of their monotheism. The Indo-European peoples, before they converted to Semitic ideas, had never considered their religion an absolute truth. Rather, they conceived of it as a heritage of the family, or the caste, and in this way they remained foreign to intolerance and proselytism. This is why we find among these peoples the liberty of thought, the spirit of inquiry and individual research." Of course, one should not look at this problem in a black and white manner, or for instance compare and contrast one platitude to another platitude. There have always been, at all times, and everywhere, massacres and exterminations. But it would be difficult to find in the pagan texts, be they of sacred or profane nature, the equivalent of what one so frequently encounters in the Bible: the idea that these massacres could be *morally justified*, that they could be deliberately authorized and ordained by one god, "as Moses the servant of the Lord commanded" (Joshua 11:12). Thus, for the perpetrators of these crimes, *good consciousness* continues to rule, not despite these massacres, but entirely *for the sake of the massacres*.

A lot of ink has been spilled over this tradition of intolerance. Particularly contentious are the words of Jesus as recorded by Luke: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26). Some claim to perceive in the word "hate" a certain form of Hebraism; apparently, these words suggest that Jesus had to be absolutely preferred to all other human beings. Some claim to see in it traces of Gnostic contamination that suggest renouncement, despoliation of goods, and the refusal of procreation. In this context, the obligation to "hate" one's parents is to be viewed as a corollary of not wishing to have children.

These interpretations remain pure conjecture. What is certain is that Christian intolerance began to manifest itself very early. In the course of history this intolerance was directed against "infidels" as well as against pagans, Jews, and heretics. It accompanied the extermination of all aspects of ancient culture—the murder of Julius of Hypati, the interdiction of pagan cults, the destruction of temples and statues, the suppression of the Olympic Games, and the arson, at the instigation of the town's Bishop Theophilus of Sarapeum, of Alexandria in A.D. 389, whose immense library of 700,000 volumes had been collected by the Ptolomeys. Then came the forced conversions, the extinction of positive science, persecution, and pyres. Ammianus Marcellinus said: "The wild beasts are less hostile to



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people than Christians are among themselves." Sulpicius Severus wrote: "Now everything has gone astray as the result of discords among bishops. Everywhere, one can see hatred, favours, fear, jealousy, ambition, debauchery, avarice, arrogance, sloth: there is general corruption everywhere."

The Jewish people were the first to suffer from Christian monotheism. The causes of Christian anti-Semitism, which found its first "justification" in the Gospel of John (probably written under the influence of Gnosticism, and to which many studies have been devoted) lie in the *proximity* of the Jewish and Christian faiths. As Jacques Solé notes: "One persecutes only his neighbors." Only a "small gap" separates Jews from Christians, but as Nietzsche says, "the smallest gap is also the least bridgeable." During the first centuries of the Christian era anti-Semitism grew out of the Christian claim to be the successor of Judaism, and bestowing on it its "truthful" meaning. For Christians, "salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22), but it is only Christianity that can be *verus Israel*. Hence the expression *perfidi*, applied to the Jews until recently by the Church in prayers during Holy Friday—an expression meaning "without faith," and whose meaning is different from the modern word "perfidious."

> The origins of modern totalitarianism are not difficult to trace. In a secular form, they are tied to the same radical strains of intolerance whose religious causes we have just examined.

Saint Paul was the first to formulate this distinction. With his replacement of the Law by Grace, Paul distinguished between the "Israel of God" and the "Israel after the flesh" (I Corinthians 10:18), which also led him to oppose circumcision: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Romans 2:28-29). Conclusion: "For we are the circumcision" (Philippians 3:3). This argument has, from the Christian point of view, a certain coherence. As Claude Tretmontant says, if the last of the *nabis* from Israel, the rabbi Yohushua of Nazareth, that is to say Jesus, is really a Messiah, then the vocation of Israel to become the "beacon of nations" must be fully accomplished, and the universalism implied in this vocation must be put entirely into practice. Just as the Law that has come to an *end* with Christ (in a double sense of the word) is no longer necessary, so has the distinction between Israel and other nations become futile as well: "There is neither Jew nor Greek" (Galatians 3:28). Consequently, universal Christianity must become *verus Israel*.

This process, which originated in the Pauline reform, has had a double consequence. On the one hand, it has resulted in the persecution of Jews who, by virtue of their "genealogical" proximity, are represented as the worst enemies of Christianity. They are the adversaries who refuse to "convert," who refuse to recognize Christianity as the "true Israel." As Shmuel Trigano notes, "by projecting itself as the *new Israel*, the West has given to Judaism a de facto jurisdiction, albeit not the right to be itself." This means that the West can become "Israelite" to the extent that it denies Jews the right to be Israelites. Henceforth, the very notion of "Judeo-Christianity" can be defined as a double incarceration. It imprisons "the Christian West," which by its own deliberate act has subordinated itself to an alien "jurisdiction," and which by doing so denies this very same jurisdiction to its legitimate (Jewish) owners. Furthermore, it imprisons the Jews who, by virtue of a religion different from their own, are now undeservedly caught in the would-be *place* of their "accomplishment" by means of a religion which is not their own. Trigano further adds: "If Judeo-Christianity laid the foundations of the West, then the very place of Israel is also the West." Subsequently, the requisites of "Westernization" must also become the requisites of assimilation and "normalization," and the denial of identity. "The crisis of Jewish normality is the crisis of the westernization of Judaism. Therefore, to exit from the West means for the Jews to turn their back to their 'normality,' that is, to open themselves up to their *otherness*." This seems to be why Jewish communities today criticize the "Western model," only after they first adopt their own specific history of a semi-amnesiac and semi-critical attitude.

In view of this, Christian anti-Semitism can be rightly described as *neurosis*. As Jean Blot writes, it is because of its "predisposition toward alienation" that the West is incapable of "fulfilling itself or rediscovering itself." And from this source arises anti-Semitic neurosis. "Anti-semitism allows the anti-Semite to project onto the Jew his own neuroses. He calls him a stranger, because he himself is a stranger, a crook, a powerful man, a parvenu; he calls him a Jew, because he himself is this Jew in the deepest depth of his soul, always on the move, permanently alienated, a stranger to his own religion and to God who incarnates him." By replacing his original myth with the myth of biblical monotheism, the West has turned Hebraism into its own superego. As an inevitable consequence, the West had to turn itself against the Jewish people by accusing them of not pursuing the "conversion" in terms of the "logical" evolution proceeding from Sinai to Christianity. In addition, the West also accused the Jewish people of attempting, in an apparent "deicide," to obstruct this evolution.

Many, even today, assume that if Jews were to renounce their distinct identity, "the Jewish problem" would disappear. At best, this is a naive proposition, and at worst, it masks a conscious or unconscious form of anti-Semitism. Furthermore, this proposition, which is inherent in the racism of assimilation and the denial of identity, represents the *reverse side* of the racism of exclusion and persecution. In the West, notes Shmuel Trigano, when the Jews were not persecuted, they "were recognized as Jews only on the condition that they first ceased to be Jews." Put another way, in order to be *accepted*, they had to *reject themselves*; they had to renounce their own Other in order to be *reduced* to the Same. In another type of racism, Jews are accepted but denied; in the first, they are ac-



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cepted but are not recognized. The Church ordered Jews to choose between exclusion (or physical death) or self-denial (spiritual and historical death). Only through conversion could they become "Christians, as others."

The French Revolution emancipated Jews as individuals, but it condemned them to disappear as a "nation"; in this sense, they were forced to become "citizens as others." Marxism, too, attempted to ensure the "liberation" of the Jewish people by imposing on them a *class* division, from which their dispersion inevitably resulted.

The origins of modern totalitarianism are not difficult to trace. In a secular form, they are tied to the same radical strains of intolerance whose religious causes we have just examined. The *organization* of totalitarianism is patterned after the organization of the Christian Church, and in a similar manner totalitarianisms exploit the themes of the "masses"—the themes inherent in contemporary mass democracy. This secularization of the system has, in fact, rendered totalitarianism more dangerous—independently of the fact that religious intolerance often triggers, in return, an equally destructive revolutionary intolerance. "Totalitarianism," writes Gilbert Durand, "is further strengthened, in so far as the powers of monotheist theology (which at least left the game of transcendence intact) have been transferred to a human institution, to the Grand Inquisitor."

It is a serious error to assume that totalitarianism manifests its real character only when it employs crushing coercion. Historical experience has demonstrated—and continues to demonstrate—that there can exist a "clean" totalitarianism, which, in a "soft" manner, yields the same consequences as the classic kinds of totalitarianism. "Happy robots" of *1984* or of *Brave New World* have no more enviable conditions than prisoners of the camps. In essence, totalitarianism did not originate with Saint-Just, Stalin, Hegel, or Fichte. Rather, as Michel Maffesoli says, totalitarianism emerges "when a subtle form of plural, polytheistic, and contradictory totality, that is inherent in organic interdependency" is superseded by a monotheistic one. Totalitarianism grows out of a desire to establish social and human unity by reducing the diversity of individuals and peoples to a single model. In this sense, he argues, it is legitimate to speak of a "polytheist social arena, referring to multiple and complementary gods" versus a "monotheistic political arena founded on the illusion of unity." Once the polytheism of values "disappears, we face totalitarianism." Pagan thought, on the other hand, which fundamentally remains attached to rootedness and to the *place*, and which is a preferential center of the crystallization of human identity, rejects all religious and philosophical forms of universalism.


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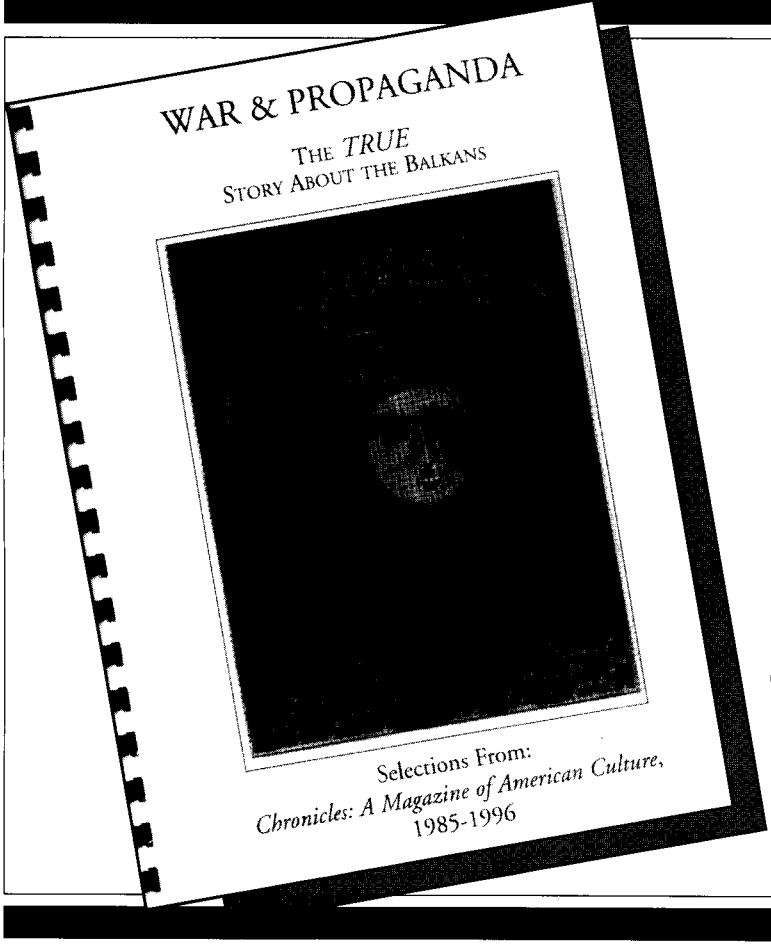


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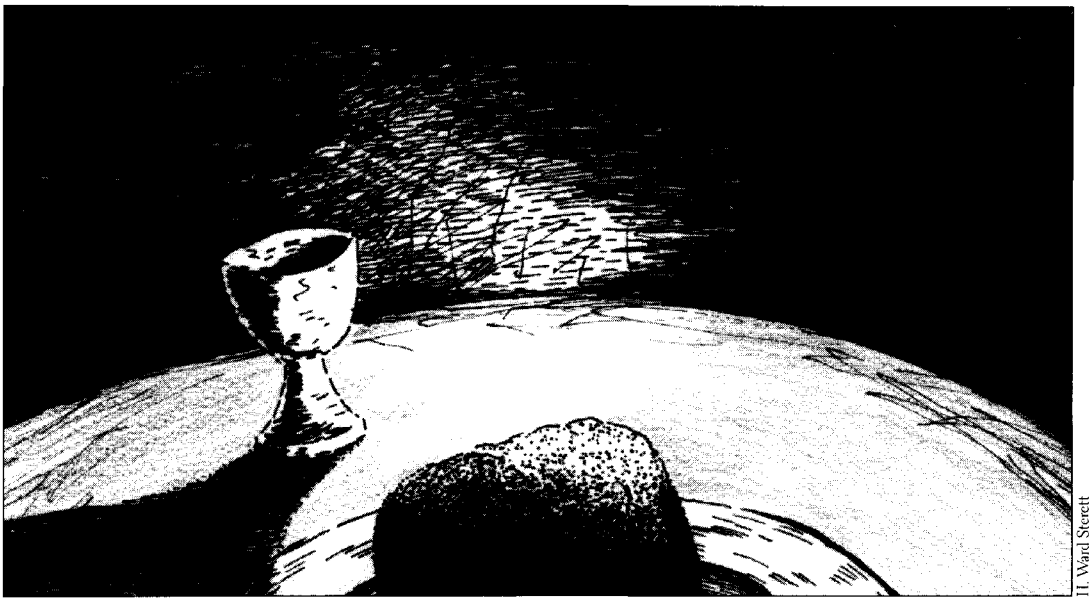
# The Twilight of the Sacred

by Thomas Molnar



H. Ward Sterett

At the center of the contemporary pagan/Christian controversy are the nature, the localization, and the psychological-mythological motivation of the sacred. The last one dominates the debate because as the transcendent God becomes less focused the sacred turns into a basically human domain. The question, no longer addressed to heaven, is not over how God communicates with man (revelation, natural law, moral conscience, and indeed the sacred), but through what psychological needs does man become aware of God? And thus if God is dead, did we not kill Him so as to take His place? Under the circumstances, we must reinvent a new pantheon, or rather a new, "objectless" sacred, a new understanding.

Paganism has an important edge over monotheism. Even the average religious person admits today that while God, or at least His image, cannot die, culturally He is in eclipse. The pagan, however, acts upon the position that his philosophical-minded forebears always held: the world is an interlocking network of self-generated and self-shaped natural products, autonomous, eternal, material with matter's "complexifications." This cosmos undergoes cyclical changes according to some unfathomable rhythm. All movements and changes are motored by necessity—the atoms of Democritus, the mechanistic view of man by the Enlightenment, Jacques Monod's theory—because who would bring into the system an element of contingency and freedom? At one time, it seemed convenient to explain these phenomena by invoking the "gods"; today this view is relegated to mythological times. The pagan gods themselves are discredited or are rehabilitated only in small circles associated with Heidegger. There remain what are inconsequentially called "humanistic values," but without a scintilla of sacredness. Neopagans themselves do not expect to restore the gods, but merely to speak about them in a historical-nostalgic tone. And if God is dead, so is the sacred, as an illusionless Nietzsche had the courage to suggest.

The fact that both paganism and monotheism have engendered brilliant civilizations around the sacred—art, literature, philosophy, law, science—is a sign of the difficulty of arbitrating between them. It seems that awe and wonder are constants of human nature, and so is the impulse to sacralize places, times, persons, and events. The Christian shrines, pilgrimages, local cults of saints, relics, and sacred events are often continuous with their pagan cultic predecessors: a new sacred added, as it were, to an old and immemorial consecration. The essential difference is that the pagan position asserts the exclusivity of nature, hence the self-engendered, immanent universe, over against the Christian view of an extracosmic creation and continuing intelligent, personal providence. In other words, the pagan sacred is derived from a cosmic self-sacralization, adumbrated by the worshiper through his tradition-imposed feeling of the *tremendum* (nature's power and majesty), whereas the Christian sacred is chosen *for* the worshiper by God, a supernatural being infinitely above him, but with whose intelligence, love, and compassion he can identify (incarnation). The Greek went to Delphi attracted by Apollo's prophetic power, and Apollo was himself a sun-god—in other words, nature's manifestation; Moses climbed Mt. Sinai to hear Yahwe, the personal being richer than any *tremendum*, able to give orders for the right conduct of life.

The difference is enormous, and so is the nature of the two kinds of sacred. Philosophically, the Greeks, the Christians, and the "Westerners" demand a *Being behind beings*, and thus inquire about an ultimate cause, the cause being different from and superior to what it caused (Aristotle). Let us grant that, aesthetically speaking, a self-caused universe may be just as admirable as a created one, but only because its order, in spite of its philosophical premises, is not haphazard but intelligent. In order to speak meaningfully of the sacred, it too must refer to a

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*Thomas Molnar's* Philosophical Grounds *(1991) was just rereleased by Transaction Publishers as* Archetypes of Thought.



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transcendent causation, not to a fortuitous encounter of circumstances, one circumstance being "popular imagination." The latter plays, of course, an important role; but worshipers also refer to divine presence and intervention, without in each case tracing the why and the how. At any rate, the thesis that an arbitrary "nature" is the being behind the beings, the ultimate reference, is not tenable; it falls by its own weight. It is absurd, because it reduces the sacred to a folkloristic event. On the contrary, monotheists are convinced that the sacred is performed by a supernatural agent: it is a willed act, sustained by other willed acts. In this light, the accusation against monotheism, that God gathers up all the sacred, leaving "nothing" to human believers or to nature, turns out to be nonsensical: Who else but a supreme intelligence would order his creation and the sacred manifestations in it? Popular imagination does the rest when it surrounds the place (for example, Golgotha) with legends and people's own handiwork (the mosque where Mohammed ascended to heaven, or Sinai where Yahwe handed Moses the Decalogue), preserving the event in consciousness and aesthetic sensibility.

The sacred exists in all civilizations, but monotheism alone produces reasoned arguments for it, in addition to the mythic, poetic, and emotional elements that reason does not block in the least. "Reason" does not mean here a mere tool of rational analysis, but a quasi-metaphysical penetration to a secret, mysterious area. In its manifestation, the sacred means nothing unless it is the awe-filled recognition of, and surrender to, a superior presence, which is not of the same substance as the sacrificer, the ritual act itself, or the impact which remains afterward among the congregation (for example, the sacred act of Abraham commanded to sacrifice his son on Mt. Moriah). This shows up with its unlimited wealth in all our feast days, personal and public sacrifices, which are not merely acts of gratitude or atonement, but also humble celebrations for our integration in a wide order: family, nation, church. The higher the order—and pagans also focus their worship on the highest god—the more meaningful the sacrifice, the more numinous the Presence.

The presence is that of the absolute Otherworldly with which we feel integrated. If there is no extraworldly agent, then what or who sacralizes the cosmos, our deeds, inner life, sense of justice? Why would certain parts of these, but not others, be sacralized and celebrated? Paganism follows its own logic when it regards the entire universe as sacred; monotheism does not do that, first because it views the universe as contingent (it could be quite different, or not be at all), and secondly because God reserves the choice of lifting some (persons, places, events, etc.) and making others feel the weight of His anger. Note that the sophisticated pagans, the Greeks, were aware that their gods were only natural forces; they did not place them much higher than human beings. The gods' only "divine" attributes were fittingly what humans longed for: happiness, that is isolation from ordinary upsets, and immortality. The Greeks' sacred was mostly a matter of communal tradition and social mores (see Alcibiades' incident with the hermae statues). In fact, Greek philosophy was a vast operation of epistemological desacralization. Christianity came to satisfy this epistemological need with its concepts of creation and incarnation.

We have mentioned the most impressive neopagan argument against the metaphysical and moral overlordship of the Christian God: that because power is widely distributed among gods and men in paganism, there is no monopoly of positive acts, no all-powerful God versus puny humans. Yet, paganism is not so innocent when it comes to transcendent ukases. It neglects to admit that the cyclical changes and their rhythm, which determine mankind's fate, are just as arbitrary as the commandments of Yahwe; moreover, the former take place independently of human merits, and all are struck down (punished?) when the hour of the Great Year strikes. All that Spengler could do with the notion of rise and fall was to show its simultaneity across various civilizations. We mention this theme for the sake of a more precise and just view. Granted, the monotheistic worshiper may be ill-equipped facing God's omnipotence—although Job's story displays the more nuanced side of this arrangement—but what are the alternatives in the pagan/Christian dispute? As Paul Ricoeur observes, in the pagan worldview no individual or communal act carries weight, for moral issues are hashed out among the gods, whose interdivine confrontations decide humanity's rewards and punishments. The "sacred," in this case, consists of the human individual's supplication and sacrifice to his tutelary deity for being protected. If his god loses the battle of wills—for example, Poseidon to Athena—the former protégé becomes the victim, independent of his own acts. Odysseus was lucky for being on Athena's side. In contrast, the monotheist burdens man with the weight of his own acts, he *is* good or evil, and is dealt with accordingly. Thus God, supposedly the jealous possessor of all the sacred, all the good, all virtue, grants much more freedom (including worship and its refusal) to man than the pagan god, a determined (unfree) and determining agent. For the monotheistic God contains, as it were, the *summum bonum* and does not have to confront other, equal-ranking gods while carrying unfree humans in his baggage. His regime accepts the consequences of man's (limited) freedom and responsibility: a higher, but of course not divine, status for the human being.

In the two outstanding areas where man meets God, the areas of the good and the beautiful, the sacred is the privileged mediating agency through which higher things are perceived and approached. This perception and approach provide us with all the richness of religion and cultural life, since we model all our work on the sacred, no matter how distantly and imperfectly. When we travel abroad, we can tell when we face a different sacred from ours, *therefore* a different style, different values, a different appreciation of acts. (The present terrifying uniformity is a sign that the sacred is everywhere in eclipse.)

The pagan artist is neither better nor worse than his monotheistic *confrère*. The sacred is the object of their labor—of their painting, sculpting, building, composing, and dancing—since the sacred is most expressive of their civilization, of the circumscription of their educated sensibility. How does one decide about the superiority of the "Smiling Christ" of Moissac, in France, or the smiling granite face of the pharaoh at Karnak? Between Greek liturgical music and the Gregorian or Bach's? True, in the Greek epic poems and tragedies responsibility is borne by gods and goddesses for any significant human action, but by the fifth century, Antigone assumes a free moral conscience: her sacred is internalized, and it challenges that of the community; she appeals to what transcends. The separation, deplored by neopagans, of the world and God thus made an early appearance, a leap from pagan to Christian morality. ◁C▷



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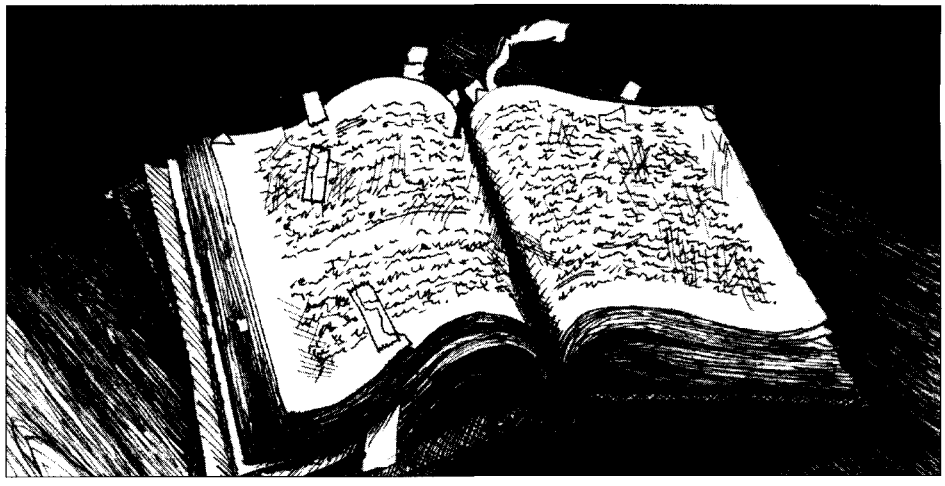
# Scholarship and Bricolage

by E. Christian Kopff



H. Ward Sterett

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*254 pp., $25.00*

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Suppose it is true that we are living in a post-Christian age. On what basis shall we live our lives, make moral decisions, create and destroy? I suppose that, if Christianity were to disappear as the guiding moral force in the United States, it would be replaced by another religion, probably Islam. People like Ernest Gellner seem to believe that we could proceed onwards from our Enlightenment tradition to formulate and live by a new rational morality. In *Shame and Necessity*, British philosopher Bernard Williams turns to the Greek world of Homer and Attic tragedy to discover the secret behind their way of thought and of life. Like Nietzsche and Heidegger, Williams is looking to find what was right in the Greek dawn, and where Western Man took the wrong path in his subsequent long journey.

Williams devotes many pages to attacking "progressivism," the belief that time improves all things and that therefore the modern world, and our way of viewing reality, is better than the past's way. Much of *Shame and Necessity* is a classical version of Herbert Butterfield's famous polemic against the "Whig Interpretation of History." Its victim is the great German scholar, Bruno Snell, whose *Discovery of the Mind* (1948) dominated classical studies for a generation after World War II, in tandem with the Oxfordian Eric Dodds' *The Greeks and the Irrational* (1951). (Dodds' book, like Williams', was delivered at Berkeley as part of the Sather Classical Lectures series.) A key date in the assault on progressivism was the publication in 1971 of Sir Hugh Lloyd-Jones' Sather Lectures, *The Justice of Zeus*. To see how much things have changed in the past two decades, one need only compare the outrage which greeted Lloyd-Jones' brilliant book with the hosannas that have poured down on Williams. The latter's ridicule of the view that Homer's great epics are morally primitive will help those who are taken in by the progressivist drivel of Julian Jaynes—whose *Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind* assimilates the thinking of Achilles and Odysseus to the psychoses of the Liverpool Strangler—but little in Williams' book will seem new to professional classicists.

The best chapter, "Shame and Autonomy," is a masterpiece of moral thinking and careful literary analysis. Williams not only rejects the progressivist argument that shame and guilt represent two different kinds of society and human being, the latter inherently superior to the former, but shows the importance of shame in any healthy human morality. Moderns wonder why there are so many more manuscripts from antiquity and the medieval world of Sophocles' *Ajax* than of his *Oedipus* or *Antigone*. A warrior who kills himself rather than suffer humiliation seems to us on a more primitive level than a brave woman who would rather die than betray her duty to family and gods. Williams helps us take Ajax seriously again.

"Shame looks to what I am," Williams points out. His elegant polemic sometimes leads him to argue as though guilt were a bad thing, but he himself reminds us that a healthy society needs guilt, too. Guilt has us look to others as shame has us look to ourselves. The idea that evolution proceeds from a primitive Shame Culture to an advanced Guilt Culture is not demonstrable from the historical record and in fact conflicts with our own feelings and observations. We see others—and if we are introspective we feel ourselves—making decisions at times in deference to what other people will say, and sometimes because of our own internalized moral commitments. The ancient Greeks did the same; evolution has nothing to do with it.

Williams' important chapter on "Necessary Identities" is much less successful. "Modern liberal thought rejects all necessary social identities. . . . It has given itself the task of constructing a framework

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of social justice to control necessity and chance, in the sense both of mitigating their effects on the individual and of showing that what cannot be mitigated is not unjust." The difference between ancient and modern attitudes turns out to hinge on Kant and to culminate in John Rawls, philosophers who have argued for the separation of moral judgment from social context and historical contingency. Williams himself has employed arguments from the ancient world to make good objections to Kant and American neo-Kantianism. His earlier writings, including his classic essay on "Moral Luck," showed that he understood the limitations and errors of Kant's attempt to escape from the morality of "my station and its duties" into one where the individual transcends any social role, and universal human rights take precedence over the traditional and the local. *Shame and Necessity* traces this abstracting vision back to Descartes (correctly) and even to Plato and Aristotle (less persuasively). Nietzsche, he says, "set the problem" of his inquiry. When push comes to shove, though, Williams cannot bear to relinquish the influence of the Enlightenment.

He has difficulty dealing with the bizarre view, held by the ancient Greeks and explained by Aristotle, that men and women are different. For one thing, "modern prejudice is to a much vaster extent [than with slavery] the same as ancient." It turns out that this Greek belief is not alien to us, being indeed quite modern. "The idea that gender roles are imposed by nature is alive in 'modern,' scientistic forms. In particular, the more crassly unreflective contributions of sociobiology to this subject represent little more than continuations of Aristotelian anthropology by other means." We are supposed to be shocked. E. O. Wilson and Thomas Fleming assert quite brazenly that their work is in the tradition of Aristotle. Williams gives no notes to this section and spends his time denouncing "the assumption that nature has something to tell us, in fairly unambiguous terms, about what social roles should be and how they should be distributed." Aristotle, Wilson, and Fleming observe how roles are distributed and then present theories that would "save the phenomena." Sexual role separation and male political dominance are, after all, cultural universals. They are found in every nonmythical society, including our own. When Williams denounces, without argument or even specific example, attempts to understand these phenomena, he reveals the limitations of abstract philosophizing when it is cut off from philological and historical research.

Williams assures us that the ancient Greeks did not believe that the distribution of social roles reflected nature. Indeed, "in its most complete and comforting form it was almost an Aristotelian specialty." On one page, he attacks Aristotle for his culturally biased defenses of the common beliefs of his society. On the next, he calls his views a personal idiosyncrasy. He does not seriously discuss Greeks who did question traditional sex roles, like Aristophanes (for a lark) and Plato, in the Fifth Book of the Republic. (Just as you cannot use your hands in soccer, Williams is forbidden to use Plato, even when he desperately needs him.) Euripides' Medea complains about the sexual double standard, but she explicitly reaffirms the natural differences between men and women. Her famous cry that she would rather fight three battles than give birth once is not an offer to volunteer, but an assessment of relative pain and fear.

Williams' treatment of slavery is especially jejune, being heavily dependent on one book by M. I. Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology* (1980). It is a poor choice. These lively and thought-provoking essays "do not constitute a history of ancient slavery," in Finley's own words, and are often devoted to polemics against other classicists, not analysis of facts. Even so, Williams cannot get his one source straight, arguing that "Greek and Roman slavery was, as Moses Finley stressed, a novel invention." On the contrary, Finley agreed with Fustel de Coulanges that slavery is a cultural universal, "a primordial fact, contemporary with the origin of society." Finley does say that "the Greeks and Romans transformed this 'primordial fact' into something new and wholly original in world history," just as they transformed epic poetry, drama, and history itself. This initial mistake leads the hapless Williams into one blunder after another. He thinks Aristotle's discussion of slavery as "natural" (in opposition to those who call it a social construction based on "violence") is a culturally biased defense of a unique Greek institution, instead of an explanation of a cultural universal. Williams contrasts the concepts of "natural" and "forced" in Aristotle's *Physics* to show that he was confused by cultural bias in his social thought, forgetting that Aristotle disagreed with the idea that slavery had no basis but violence.

Williams is angered by Aristotle's observation that slaves and free people differ as a rule, somatically and intellectually, "but the opposite often happens, and some people have the bodies of free men and others the souls." "The last sentence is a disaster," Williams crows. Aristotle distinguishes between aspects of the world that are true "always" (*aei*) and aspects that are true "for the most part" (*epi to poly*). His theory admits of, and expects, exceptions. Our science distinguishes between correlations that are statistically significant and those that are not. Does Williams think that only correlations of 100 percent are statistically significant? The statistically significant correlation of intelligence to social status in the United States and Great Britain is in no way refuted by the existence of intelligent poor people and silly rich people.

Page after page is consumed by the sort of liberal self-righteousness which disgusted Friedrich Engels, Karl Marx's best friend. In his *Anti-Duhring*, Engels wrote, "It is very easy to inveigh against slavery and similar things in general terms, and to give vent to high moral indignation at such infamies. Unfortunately all that this conveys is what everyone knows, namely, that these institutions of antiquity are no longer in accord with our present conditions and our sentiments, which these conditions determine. . . . We should never forget that our whole economic, political and intellectual development presupposes a state of things in which slavery was as necessary as it was universally recognized." Williams knows that among the ancients "slavery, in most people's eyes, was not just, but necessary. Because it was necessary, it was not, as an institution, seen as unjust either." What he finds objectionable is "Aristotle's attempt to justify the institution." In *Politics I* Aristotle says that, until the day comes when machines can replace human labor, slavery will be necessary for human society. He objects to those who call slavery "contrary to nature and unjust," arguing that it is not rational to use such terms about a universal and necessary social institution. Williams' contrast between "not unjust" and "just" is an unworthy linguistic quibble. In Greek idiom, *litotes* ("not un-



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just") is an emphatic form of the positive ("just").

This is the way Williams treats his own field, philosophy. In dealing with Classical Greek literature his ignorance of the scholarly problems of the texts he deals with, and especially of the German bibliography on these problems, is appalling. His occasional *obiter dicta* on problems he knows nothing about are an embarrassment. His one comment on textual criticism combines arrogance with ignorance in a footnote that will remain a permanent blot on the Sather series. What provoked him to attempt such a work? His apologia near the end of the book gives a hint. "We are in an ethical condition that lies not only beyond Christianity, but beyond its Kantian and its Hegelian legacies. . . . We know that the world was not made for us, or we for the world, that our history tells no purposive story, and that there is no position outside the world or outside history from which we might hope to authenticate our activities. . . . I am not denying that the modern world is through and through different from the ancient world. . . . If we find things of special beauty and power in what has survived from that world, it is encouraging to think that we might move beyond marveling at them, to putting them, or bits of them, to modern uses."

This is the scholarship of bricolage. Williams is a tourist who wanders out of the Holiday Inn in downtown Rome, photographs Bernini's baroque elephant, and stops for a cappuccino near the Pantheon. He then strolls down an ancient Roman road until he comes to a modern thoroughfare. He makes his way through the busy traffic, walks into the Piazza Navona and sits down to enjoy a delicious gelato. As a civilized and liberal person, he reminds himself that his appreciation for this ice cream does not in itself prove the superiority of our society to other or earlier cultures. He is rummaging through the past looking for hints to solve specific problems and to pass his leisure time. For him, history is the ultimate Old Curiosity Shop.

Williams mentions Alasdair MacIntyre's theory that human beings think and create in traditions. He approves of MacIntyre's rejection of progressivism, but not of his reasons for doing so. For MacIntyre, the liberal tradition that comes from the Enlightenment is an intellectual mess because it is the "tradition of anti-traditionalism" (just as Gadamer saw, it embodies the "prejudice against prejudice"). It is, therefore, constantly pulling out the rug from under its own intellectual feet. It confuses and misuses ideas and methods that make sense in one tradition, but cannot be transferred *ad lib.*, anymore than life forms can be transported from one environment to another without great danger to them or to the environment, or both.

Williams has a problem with the historical observation that creativity takes place in conscious traditions, and that men and women in all societies have different roles. Such observations rest on historical and philological research whose methods have been practiced for millennia; they cannot be defended by the techniques of British analytical philosophy, which are less than a century old. Williams can fiddle with bric-a-brac, but he cannot deal with coherent traditions, no matter how long lived and creative. Finally, he has nowhere else to go, and by the end of the book he is openly describing Enlightenment ideals (as opposed to those of earlier traditions) as "social and political ideals in favor of truthfulness and the criticism of arbitrary and merely traditional power," even as "social and political honesty." Thus Bernard Williams ends his own Sather Lectures as a progressivist.

His proclamations of honesty and truthfulness are soon belied. He continually misrepresents Aristotle. He cannot mention Plato without equating him with (usually) Kant, and sometimes with Descartes. The reason eventually slips out. Plato "is manifestly and professedly offensive to liberal and democratic opinion." If there was ever a philosopher who was in favor of truth and "the criticism of . . . merely traditional power," even to the extent of questioning private property, and role division between the sexes and within the family, it was Plato. It does him no good, however, because he also criticized democracy. So in the fever swamps of the analytical philosophers, Plato is *a priori* wrong, and any stick is good enough to beat him with, even the worn cudgel of Kantianism.

Hot on the heels of *suggestio falsi* comes her sister, *suppressio veri*. The 20th-century philosopher who spent his life reading the pre-Socratic Greeks in search of a way out of our contemporary malaise is Heidegger. Williams never mentions him by name, although there is at least one sneering reference to "our relations to Being," and there may be other hints that I missed. Heidegger is blackballed, like Plato, for his politics. Williams spends pages trying to invent a game where he can choose Sophocles, Thucydides, and Nietzsche for his team, and leave Plato, Aristotle, Kant, and Hegel on the other. In doing so, he suppresses the profound differences between Kant and the earlier figures, and the similarity of his own enterprise to Heidegger's. It is not only implausible; it is dishonest.

But Williams ends up on the same side as his old bugbear, Kant, in their common mission of salvaging the Enlightenment. Williams differs from Neo-Kantians like John Rawls regarding the best way to do so, and such internecine feuds are often fiercer than the slow wars of attrition that take place between traditions. Rawls thinks a defense of the liberal regime means going back to Kant, and he has made an impressive case for that strategy. The moral and philosophical problems that this involves have led many to seek other ways out of the dilemma. Alasdair MacIntyre understood that the rejection of Kant means the rejection of the Enlightenment, and of the liberal regime. Bernard Williams is trying another possible escape route, one suggested by Nietzsche and Heidegger: the careful investigation of a great, creative non-Christian civilization, such as Greece from the eighth to the fifth century, B.C., as represented by writers from Homer to Thucydides. What the Greeks of this period have to tell us—and it is much—does not lead directly, or even probably, to the liberal regime. Of course, this last sentence rests on historical observation, not on proofs acceptable to analytical philosophy.

As the work of a talented amateur, *Shame and Necessity* is marked by brilliant insights but also by naiveté—which is not all bad—and by ignorance, which is. The worst problem, however, is the author's unwillingness to admit to himself what he is doing. Like Immanuel Kant and John Rawls, he is seeking a defense of the regime that rules his country and ours. He misrepresents his mission, and he misrepresents the intellectual and political context of the tools he is using for his rescue operation. He frequently talks about what the ancient Greeks can mean for "us" in "our" post-Christian situation. The careful reader will eventually discover that by "us" Bernard Williams means "them." ◁



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# Out of Whole Cloth

*by Philip Jenkins*

**Satan's Silence: Ritual Abuse and the Making of a Modern American Witch Hunt**
*by Debbie Nathan and Michael Snedeker*
*New York: Basic Books;*
*317 pp., $25.00*

◆

*Satan's Silence* is critical for understanding current debates over issues as diverse as feminism, the social position of children, the growth of therapeutic values and beliefs, and the status of American civil liberties. This might seem hyperbolic, but only to those who have escaped the recent clamor over the supposed epidemic of ritual and Satanic abuse and violence to which American children are said to be subjected. According to these tales, countless thousands of children have from their earliest years been repeatedly raped and violated by satanic cults, in appalling rituals that often involve the consumption of blood, urine, and feces, and the murder of humans and animals. Though seemingly *outré*, notions of "Satanic Ritual Abuse" have become widespread among groups as disparate as feminist theorists, child protection advocates, psychotherapists, and Christian fundamentalists. Indeed, the acceptance of SRA has for some years been an ideological touchstone in such circles: proof that one takes sides with the victims—with women and children—against the incessant terrorism waged by the diabolical hosts inspired by an oppressive patriarchal society. To express skepticism is tacitly to acquiesce in the crimes, even to become a vicarious participant. If we suggest that children are lying or mistaken in their claims, we are seeking to reverse a generation of progress in the direction of "believing the victim," of taking children's rights seriously. We are also rejecting a cardinal precept of modern therapy. The current equivalent of the 17th-century phrase, "No bishop, no king," seems to be "No satanist, no therapist"; or, "No satanic abuse, no child protection."

Nathan and Snedeker have proved beyond any doubt that the whole ritual abuse scenario is utterly fictitious, founded on a sickening mixture of gullibility, avarice, self-promotion, and personal malice. It is often tempting to pursue a moderate course, to argue that while most such charges might be false, there is obviously a core of fact: surely there could not be such abundant smoke without a little fire? But as with the anti-Jewish blood libel of past years, from which the legend partly derives, ritual abuse offers a classic example of a slander cut from whole cloth. In reality, the number of children victimized by satanic gangs is equal to the number of Christian infants butchered by Jews at Passover: zero. Reciting either myth as factual should earn the culprit public ostracism.

*Satan's Silence* shows brilliantly and persuasively how the SRA theory originated in the 1970's with speculations by the "anti-cult" movement, notions that were focused and magnified by *Michelle Remembers*, published in 1980, in which a woman purported to recall abuse by her mother's cult many years previously. The book initiated a boom in the therapeutic recollection of early trauma that has made fortunes for snake-oil psychiatrists with the ethical standards of Ted Bundy. Incidentally, the authors fail to note that the *Michelle* story apparently derived from tales of the doings of West African leopard cults in the colonial era, an exotic mythology lovingly transplanted to North America, where it has blossomed splendidly: as in ancient times, *ex Africa semper aliquid novi*. The various strands of the legend merged in 1984-85 with the case of the McMartin preschool in Southern California, in which a group of seven innocent teachers were subjected to years of hell at the sadistic pleasure of the Los Angeles media and prosecutor's office on charges of inflicting bizarre sexual rituals on hundreds of toddlers. The McMartin affair was the model for hundreds of later incidents, in which teachers and caregivers were identified as the Special Forces in Satan's endless horde.

Case by case, Nathan and Snedeker show painstakingly how such witch hunts are generated: how minor physical oddities in a child patient are taken as proof of the "witch's mark" of abuse; how child "victims" are subsequently interrogated at terrifying length until they seek escape by accusing anyone put forward by the inquisitors; and how unscrupulous prosecutors drive home these charges by the use of jailhouse snitches and media leaks. The chief problem is what might be called the "overkill" phenomenon; ever-willing child witnesses seeking their elders' approval by constant embroidery of their tales, which expand into wondrous realms of sacrifices and massacres, hidden tunnels, Nazi mind-control, satanically mobilized killer bees, and CIA atrocities (every item in this list derives from an authentic SRA case, including the bees and the tunnels). Such rococo fabrications, though usually excluded from court, still fuel the fantasies of conspiracy theorists, among whom the creators of quirky television series like *The X-Files* are presumably viewed as skeptics.

When SRA theory originated in the early 1980's, critics were remarkably scarce, few people being willing to express their doubts in print for fear of attracting public obloquy. Worse, the therapists and prosecutors who nurtured this monstrous creation were swift to allege that the defenders of accused ritual abusers were themselves clandestine diabolists, so that to be seen as a member of "the backlash" was an unenviable position. While I am proud to say that my first contribution to the literature of dissent dates from 1985, I claim no merit comparable to the authors of *Satan's Silence*. Michael Snedeker belongs to that elite corps of attorneys who had the courage to defend parents and teachers accused in such cases, despite the risk of being stigmatized for "defending the Devil." And Debbie Nathan is the sort of investigative journalist one would not dare invent in fiction, at a time when so few people believe in the image of the heroic crusading press. She has written on the most outrageous witch hunts, incidents deemed untouchable by local media hacks, and has fought tirelessly to free the thousands of falsely accused and imprisoned. Knowing the power and lack of scruple of those she is denouncing, she provides meticulous documentation of her charges against therapists and SRA true believers; charges of malfeasance and obscene greed that



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would be incredible were they not buttressed by irrefutable evidence.

The present book is exactly what one might expect from the collaboration of a brilliant lawyer and a courageous journalist, both of them motivated by outrage at the atrocities inflicted on innocent people by crooked and/or deranged therapists and prosecutors and their cheerleaders from the unhappy alliance of radical feminists and fundamentalists. (Why am I not surprised to find that one of the worst false convictions outlined in this book was secured by a Florida prosecutor named Janet Reno?) President Clinton, who is so keen on having a war crimes trial root out the collective sins of a community and its leaders, could find work enough in Southern California without venturing into the Balkans.

There is blame enough here, and to spare; blame for thousands of individuals and groups; for the true believers, for the pressure groups who permitted the scandal, and—perhaps even more—for the media who consistently failed to stand up for the truth. The authors end with a powerful but presumably futile appeal for reparations and redress: "The involvement of women's activists in this effort would also help feminism's sullied reputation among people who have suffered from false charges. Child protectionists and feminists who refuse to help make these amends will ultimately be remembered as the deluded commanders of a crusade whose enemies were phantoms, but whose casualties were all too real." Put another way, they will go down in history as the people who gave Devil worship and human sacrifice a bad name.

*Philip Jenkins is head of the religious studies program at Penn State University. His latest book,* Pedophiles and Priests: Anatomy of a Social Crisis, *was just released by Oxford University Press.*

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# Black Confederates

*by Clyde Wilson*

**Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia**
*By Ervin L. Jordan, Jr.*
*Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia;*
*447 pp., $67.50*

**Black Slaveowners: Free Black Slavemasters in South Carolina, 1790-1860**
*By Larry Koger*
*Columbia: University of South Carolina Press;*
*286 pp., $14.95*

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Black Confederates! Remember, you heard it here first. You will be hearing more if you have any interest at all in the Great Unpleasantness of the last century that is the focal point of American history. There are more things in heaven and earth, dear Horatio, than are dreamed of by Ken Burns.

In the film *Gettysburg* appears the English Colonel Arthur Fremantle, played as a somewhat silly character. Fremantle was a real person who accompanied the Confederate Army on the Gettysburg campaign and published a book, *Three Months in the Southern States*. One incident noted by Fremantle in his book did not, of course, make it into the movie—the spectacle of a black Confederate marching a file of Yankee prisoners to the rear.

Real life is always a lot more complicated than ideological history. The image that most Americans carry around in their heads of the Old South and the black slavery that flourished over much of this continent for two and a half centuries is cartoonish and largely misleading. (Just think of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Roots*.) It is also, of course, extremely comforting to the mainstream American consciousness to think of the heroic soldiers in blue marching forth to strike the chains from the suffering black people—setting aside the fact that emancipation did not become a war goal until well after hostilities had begun, and that in many cases it resulted only in destructive uprooting or a change of masters.

The material brought forth in these two recently published works has not been unknown; it has always been self-evident to serious historians who have worked with primary sources. Large numbers of black people identified the South and the Confederacy as their homeland and homefolks, and did not rush into the arms of the emancipators. This really is not surprising to anyone who knows anything about history or human nature, which, of course, does not include Ken Burns. The Confederate Army was vastly sustained by black men who drove teams, cooked, foraged, dug fortifications, cared for the wounded, and occasionally took up arms. George Washington Cable, the author, when a mere youth of 15 or so, served as General Bedford Forrest's headquarters clerk. At the beginning of the war, Forrest took 50 of his slaves with him, promising freedom if they served faithfully. Cable records how he was told by Forrest to make out emancipation papers for all but one of these. A number of units of free blacks volunteered for Confederate service, and near the end of the war the Confederacy had decided to enlist black units. There was much opposition to this invasion of private property, but there was also solid support. As in the Union Army, they were to receive the same pay as white soldiers. It is a fact that black men who had been with the army were welcomed at Confederate reunions and received Confederate pensions from Southern states.

Dr. Jordan's book presents a tremendous amount of documentation about the activities of black Virginians for and against the Confederacy. He is far from a Confederate sympathizer, which makes the data all the more telling. When one considers that over large areas of the South, the black population was 70 to 90 percent and most able-bodied white men were off fighting the war, and that nevertheless no uprisings or significant outrages occurred on the homefront, one has to take a rather more complicated view of the Civil War than is usually passed around. It is true that many slaves left when they had the chance, when federal forces came near, but sometimes they had to be taken away by force. (Often they found themselves pressed into harsher service with the Union Army than with the Southern.) This attitude of the blacks was not due to ignorance or lack of understanding. When Sherman burned over 100 blocks of Columbia, the "winds" that



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were said to have been responsible did not spare the homes of black people, though they did, mysteriously, jump over that of the French consul. The mayor of Columbia observed three Union soldiers shoot to death a black man they considered insolent. When he reported this to Sherman he was told, "We don't have time for court martials and such." During Sherman's progress blacks, like white civilians, were left without food and shelter, and black women were much more vulnerable than white women were to rape and murder. Jordan's book is not the only one in this field of revisionism. The *Journal of Confederate History* a few years ago published as an entire issue a symposium on "Black Southerners in Gray"; while Professor Edward C. Smith of American University, an African-American, has produced two video tape lectures on the same subject.

Prior to the war there were almost a half-million free blacks in the United States, more than half of whom lived in the South. Historians have long noted that many of these were prosperous, and some were slaveowners. The situation has usually been explained as one of a few blacks having nominal ownership of relatives. There was some of that, but also abundant evidence, as marshaled by Koger for South Carolina (and for Louisiana by Gary Mills, *Forgotten People: Cane River's Creoles of Color*, 1977) that many participated in the Southern economy as masters of slave labor in exactly the same way as their white neighbors. (At the time of the averted Denmark Vesey insurrection in Charleston in the 1820's, 72 percent of free black households in the city held slaves.) All of this is not to provide a defense of slavery, but it does provide the grounds for a less simplistic and moralistic rendering of our ambivalent history.

In the 1970's, it was fashionable to attribute American racial problems to "the legacy of slavery." Is it not curious that, the further away we have moved in time and location from the regime of the Old South, the worse these problems have become? How simple it was, in the days before the Watts riots, to attribute all problems to the benighted South. If only the South were corrected with an iron hand, then all would be well. That was a false and destructive rationale, as should be evident to all. It is said that there is now a net in-migration of black Americans back to the South, reversing the pattern of most of this century. There is also evidence that the South (except for a few international metropolises like Atlanta, New Orleans, and Dallas) enjoys more racial peace and progress than elsewhere in the Union.

It appears that Americans are in the process of rethinking some of the fundamentals of race relations that have been held sacrosanct for the past half century. These historical works are both a product of and a contribution to that rethinking, which yet has far to go.

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# Old Progressives Don't Die

*by Justus D. Doenecke*

**Forgotten Lessons: Selected Essays of John T. Flynn**
*Edited by Gregory P. Pavlik*
*Irvington-on-Hudson, New York: Foundation for Economic Education; 199 pp., $14.95*

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Surprisingly enough, in many ways journalist and commentator John T. Flynn was a typical progressive. Long a figure of prominence on the American right, he was not politically active in the time of Woodrow Wilson, whose domestic policies he much admired. He did, however, first gain prominence as a muckraker denouncing the financial chicanery of Wall Street. From 1930 to 1940, he contributed a weekly column for the reformist *New Republic*, which involved exposés of investment trusts and manipulation in securities. The very title of his column, "Other People's Money," came from a book by prominent Wilsonian jurist Louis Brandeis and was used with Brandeis's permission. In the 30's, Flynn helped staff Senate investigations of Wall Street and of the munitions industry, the latter best known as the Nye committee. Like many old progressives, Flynn quickly soured on much of the New Deal, finally accusing it of seeking to impose a corporate state upon the United States. As World War II approached, Flynn became an ardent anti-interventionist, heading the semi-autonomous New York chapter of the America First Committee. Like such other old progressives as publisher William Randolph Hearst and publicist George Creel, Flynn moved sharply to the right. Indeed, during his later years, he was an ardent defender of Senator Joe McCarthy.

Flynn was a quintessential progressive not only in his political odyssey but in his distinction between appearance and reality. As noted by Richard Hofstadter in his *Age of Reform* (1955), to the progressive reality was "a series of unspeakable plots, personal iniquities, moral failures, which, in their totality, had come to govern American society only because the citizen had relaxed his moral vigilance." Yet, not limiting himself to business graft and New Deal bureaucracy, Flynn thought that he had stumbled upon the major key to modern history, a "discovery" that he propounded from the late 1930's to his death in 1964. To Flynn, the dynamics of war and revolution centered not so much on global aggrandizement, commercial domination, or the quest for power. Rather, it was the common practice of rulers to alleviate unemployment by means of massive spending, along with its accompanying debt, that made them trigger-happy. When the chips are finally called in, powers go to war, thereby creating a national emergency that gives their regimes a new lease on life and justifies even greater spending in the name of survival. The price: inevitable economic collapse once the conflict is over. Flynn combined this theory with a belief in what historian Eric F. Goldman called "The Great Conspiracy," the belief that Franklin D. Roosevelt and his advisors, together with assorted intellectuals, betrayed the nation by manipulating American policy to strengthen world communism.

The material in *Forgotten Lessons* is very much in this mold. Here the essays focus on many of Flynn's favorite enemies: the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933, which he saw rooted in business's effort to restrain competition; the massive spending policies of Harry Hopkins, New Dealer par excellence; the economic booms produced by World War II and the Cold War; those "eggheads" from Plato to Henry Wallace who advocated collectivism under the innocent guise of "social planning"; the United Nations, which Flynn saw as a device to manipulate the United States into preserving the British Empire. Compiler Gregory P. Pavlik, who also edits *The Freeman*, contributes a most appreciative introduction.

Occasionally in these essays, Flynn's old-time "radicalism" comes through. The social welfare movement, he wrote in 1939, "did an immense amount of good." Hopkins, who directed the much-criticized Work Projects Administration, was "an able administrator" who "has done a good job in a most difficult role under the most trying conditions." In 1949, Flynn claimed that in times of depression government borrowing of idle money for public works was "a completely sound device." Herbert Hoover himself, Flynn said in 1955, had correctly warned in the 1920's about "the wild stock speculations, easy credit, bad banking practices, abuses of the corporate system." At other times Flynn is the prototypical McCarthyite, his gift for innuendo symbolized by the word "strange" whenever he wants to imply conspiracy without evidence. Thus it was "strange" that key Roosevelt advisors were not informed of Henry Morgenthau's plan to cripple Germany until after FDR had approved it at the 1944 Quebec Conference. Joe McCarthy was simply "a man who doesn't think they [communists] should hold jobs—particularly important jobs—in the government."

The reader is spared much of Flynn's early "liberalism." In 1933, he claimed the nation desperately needed a planned society "organized not for economic war, but for economic cooperation, with a national mechanism to control production and distribution, money, wages, and profit." In the period 1933-1935, Flynn favored a battery of federal legislation: self-liquidating government loans to construct low-cost homes, a federal "security wage" law for the unemployed and aged, the Rural Electrification Administration, the Tennessee Valley Authority. In 1936, he endorsed Socialist Norman Thomas for President. In 1940, he called the Federal Bureau of Investigation "a Gestapo."

Nor does the reader catch the full impact of the later Flynn. In 1945, he accused Roosevelt of seeking a back door to war by deliberately concealing vital information from American commanders in Hawaii. Though Flynn's America First Committee was called a "Nazi transmission belt" and he himself was suddenly dropped from some prominent journals in the early 40's, Flynn did not really express outrage over the character assassination of others. In 1949, he called the work of the House Un-American Activities Committee "a monument to their vision and their patriotism" and claimed that noted American missionary E. Stanley Jones preached "the glory of Red Christianity." Almost all publicity given outrages against Southern blacks was due to "the propaganda agencies of the Communist trouble-makers." In 1951, he wrote, "We launched the great enterprise of turning over more than half the world to the Communist tyranny." The China Lobby seldom found a more ardent exponent than John T. Flynn.

In short, Flynn and his politics remain more complex than the picture present-



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ed in *Forgotten Lessons*. Unfortunately our best work on Flynn is an excellent but long-neglected doctoral thesis, Richard Clark Frey, Jr.'s "John T. Flynn and the United States in Crisis, 1928-1950" (University of Oregon, 1969). If Pavlik's anthology can renew interest in the entire corpus of Flynn's work, we can understand an entire state of mind far too neglected by historians.

*Justus D. Doenecke is a professor of history at New College of the University of South Florida. His latest book, written with John E. Wilz, is* From Isolation to War, 1931-1941.

# In Enemy Country

*by Gregory McNamee*

**Finding Moon**
*by Tony Hillerman*
*New York: HarperCollins;*
*288 pp., $24.00*

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At the start of his new novel, *Finding Moon*, Tony Hillerman apologizes "for wandering away from our beloved Navajo canyon country." That apology, however, is unnecessary. While *Finding Moon* may not be Hillerman's best novel to date, it takes its readers on a suspenseful ride through exotic country in just the way that his best-selling Leaphorn-Chee mysteries have done.

In *Finding Moon*, Hillerman introduces a character we may well be hearing of again: Moon Mathias, a former combat infantryman turned small-town newspaper reporter and curmudgeon. Readers may be forgiven for not liking Mathias much at first, for Hillerman paints him, in the opening pages of his book, as a thoroughly unsympathetic man. Mathias is content to show up at work, bang out a few stories, suck down coffee as a placebo for the booze he has recently given up, and head back to a home he shares with a much younger girlfriend. Most of his energy is devoted to carefully avoiding emotional commitment of any kind.

His unentangled life snarls suddenly on the morning of April 12, 1975, when Mathias receives a call from airport security at Los Angeles International: his mother has taken ill while awaiting a flight for the Philippines. Not long before, his younger brother Ricky, an officer who resigned his commission to maintain a fleet of aircraft for a shadowy private concern in Southeast Asia, has been killed somewhere in Cambodia, "burned to ashes in a broken helicopter." Mathias guesses that his mother was on her way to retrieve his brother's remains.

But the situation is far more complicated than that. Mathias's mother, it transpires, was not on her way to claim her son, but her son's child, a girl born to a Cambodian woman. The government in Phnom Penh has collapsed that same day, helicopters are hiving on embassy roofs, and foreigners throughout Southeast Asia are in headlong flight from advancing communist armies. A time of purges, civil war, and payback is no time for a child of mixed descent to start life in this place; as the woman who enlists herself in his support, a Dutch expatriate name Osa Van Winjgaarden, explains to Moon, "The Khmers don't like the Laotians, and the Laotians don't like the Thais, and the Vietnamese don't like the Montagnards, and nobody likes people who are mixed."

Mathias sets out in his mother's place to bring Ricky's daughter to the United States. His voyage takes him into the tiger cages of Ferdinand Marcos's Philippines, down atmospheric back alleys out of *The Deer Hunter*, and across the South China Sea in a leaky tub recalling the stories of Joseph Conrad. He races across the Mekong Delta in a commandeered armored personnel carrier, braving mountains and swamps and minefields with a ragtag crew of helpers. He wanders into and out of scenes of carnage that ring unpleasantly true (Mr. Hillerman, a veteran of World War II, dedicates his book to the men of his unit and to all those who have earned the Combat Infantry Badge), and he sees firsthand what a world in collapse looks like. The experience changes him, and when he finally finds his niece, Mathias discovers his elation at successfully completing his mission tempered by sorrow. "Now he could go home," Hillerman writes. "If he could get there. But where was the joy he should be feeling?"

Much of Hillerman's story is unlikely in the extreme, veering dangerously close to the comic-book antics of *Rambo*. The plotting is neither as thick nor as careful as in the Leaphorn-Chee mysteries for which Hillerman has become famous; the ending is just a little too pat; and the text is sprinkled with the throwaway clichés of the mystery genre.

But Moon's voyage is as much about self-discovery as selfless rescue, which explains why many of the most interesting plot developments, coming in a priest's confessional in Manila, where we discover just what has embittered Moon for so long, accord perfectly with Hillerman's vision of Moon as a man of no attachments, a man with nothing much to recommend him, who comes nevertheless to appreciate the needs of others through a nearly religious awakening. As Moon comes to grips with loss, rootedness, and the meaning of family, Hillerman's story acquires real depth, a depth that has not emerged before in his Navajo stories.

The result is a fine suspense novel that smacks more of Graham Greene than of John D. McDonald, or even the Tony Hillerman of old. Hillerman's many admirers will not be disappointed with *Finding Moon*, even if they, with the author, find themselves far from familiar ground.

*Gregory McNamee's latest book is* The Sierra Club Desert Reader: A Literary Journey *(Sierra Club Books).*

## LIBERAL ARTS

### WATCH OUT, MR. CHIPS

According to the London *Daily Telegraph* last December, a London schoolteacher named Ursula Gregory was denied consideration for a teaching position because she used the word "immigrants." A municipal panel felt that her use of such terms showed a lack of ethnic awareness and sensitivity. "I was worried about the use of words such as 'immigrants' and 'recent African refugees,'" said one panel member. The members did give consideration to a candidate who had taught in Nigeria, because "teaching there was akin to teaching in Lambeth."



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# Letter From Inner Israel

*by Jacob Neusner*

## State-Sponsored Prayer

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For practicing Christians, Judaists, and Muslims, what is at stake in state-sponsored prayer in public schools is whether the particularities that make us what we are make a difference. Constitutional issues aside, there are strong theological arguments against legislating prayer for young people. Specifically, nonsectarian prayer speaks for no one in particular and addresses Whom it may concern. But Christianity, Judaism, and Islam speak of one, unique God, to whom, as Christians, Judaists, or Muslims, we are called by specific, and each of us thinks a unique, revelation. While individually and privately we may pray as undifferentiated humanity, in public we pray as the Body of Christ, the Church, or as Holy Israel, God's first love, or as the Nation of Islam. We cannot say other people's prayers and do not expect them to say ours, even while we affirm that all three of the great monotheist religions address one and the same God, the only God, who made heaven and earth.

State-sponsored, nonsectarian prayer in school violates those theological norms. For just as there is no such thing as religion in general, but only specific and concrete religions, that is, communities of the faithful, so there can be no such thing as prayer *from* no one in particular *to* no one in particular. That kind of prayer contradicts the convictions of religious communities that deem themselves distinctive, holy, and called forth by God.

True, when Jews and Christians gather for shared worship, Christians ordinarily forgo the name of Jesus Christ, and Jews will compose for the occasion noncanonical prayers or simply read a Psalm. But both participants understand that such prayers are merely occasional gestures of good will, that they hardly express the faith of the faithful standing before the God whom they know and love. Throughout history, Jews have recognized that Christianity and Islam affirm that same one God whom we know through the Torah, but simply because each of us concurs with the other's conception of the One to whom we pray, this does not at all yield the possibility of common prayer. We speak each in our own, unique way; we honor the piety and prayer of others; but we do not participate and *cannot* participate in these prayers, unless we apostatize.

This is not to say that I do not share the concerns of those who advocate state-sponsored prayer in the public school. I share those aspirations, and I object to the rigid and ideologically radical secularism that has led us to the present impasse. It is one thing to say that the state will not sponsor public prayer through the schools. It is another thing to say, as has been said, the state will forbid evidences of personal piety and prayer; will provide no access to religious activities on its property; will discriminate against religious activities of a voluntary character on the part of students; will discourage Christian students from expressing their convictions concerning Jesus Christ and Jewish students from observing the commandments of their faith, all in the name of the separation of church and state. In one decision after another, the courts have systematically denied religious Americans the right to express their religious convictions on public occasions (school graduations, for instance). In the case of Islam and Judaism, the University of Virginia has declared that it will not support Christian student activities, since Christianity is a religion, but it will support Judaic and Islamic student activities, since these are ethnic cultures. I am sure Muslims will share the indignation of Jews in being dismissed as a nonreligion.

It is in the schools that the diverse families of America—diverse in region and race and religion—come together. It is in schools where youngsters most often discover not only who they are, but also what they are not. When it comes to prayer, pretending that we all can and should address God in one and the same way teaches two bad lessons. First, it denigrates important particularities: our way to God, known in a particular church or synagogue or mosque, now gives way to another path to God, which we too must walk. Second, it fabricates a common faith where there is none, and so places our common Americanness into conflict with our significant points of difference.

When I was in third grade, I discovered that not one of our Founding Fathers was Jewish. This harsh reality dawned in early November, when we as young Connecticut Yankees were studying Thanksgiving. Specifically, we were assigned the project of drawing pictures of the Puritan fathers going to synagogue—well, that is how I understood the assignment. So I asked the teacher, Miss Melcher, "How do you spell synagogue?" "Why do you need to know?" she asked. "To write under my picture, 'The Puritan fathers going to synagogue on Friday night.'" For, belonging to the Reform Temple in West Hartford, that is what my family would do. "They weren't Jews!" she said scornfully. "They were Christians!" I was shocked and never believed anything Miss Melcher told us again, unless I could confirm it on my own.

As I grew older, I came to dread the occasion for international hypocrisy that classroom praying in the Protestant manner and hymn singing precipitated ("Faith of our fathers" did not refer to the Torah, I found out). And when the Catholics stopped the Lord's Prayer before the words, "for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever, Amen," but loudly, ostentatiously said, "Amen," a half-dozen words earlier, I was sure that prayer must confuse God. And maybe even offend Her.

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JOURNALISM

# The Rise and Fall of a Paleoconservative at the *Washington Times* (Part I)

*by Samuel Francis*

After nearly a decade of working for the *Washington Times*, I was fired last September. Technically, I "resigned," but Wes Pruden, the *Times*' editor-in-chief, asked me for a letter of resignation, and I had no real choice but to agree. Nor, by that time, had I any real desire to remain on the staff. The reasons for my defenestration from a paper whose editor styles it "the official voice of the conservative movement" are complicated and—at least to me and many who express support for me—somewhat mysterious, though in certain quarters my firing and the disappearance of my column from the Washington market are reasons for satisfaction, if not outright glee. Not only did Pruden demand my resignation, but he also immediately forbade the publication of my syndicated column in the *Times*.

But the circumstances of my decline and fall at the *Washington Times* point to a story more important than what happened (or happens) to me and my column. The story has to do with larger matters: the direction of American conservatism, the boundaries of what is called the "public discourse" and who decides where those boundaries lie, and the real meaning of free expression in a nation that loves to boast of its commitment to "openness." If I dwell on myself and the circumstances of my firing even at the risk of sounding self-serving, it is because these issues are best understood in the context of my relationships with the one newspaper I have worked for.

From 1986 to 1995, I served the *Times* as an editorial writer, deputy editorial page editor, acting editorial page editor, and nationally syndicated staff columnist. When, six months after arriving at the paper, the editorial page editor who hired me and four of his senior writers resigned in anger over an editorial dispute, I declined to walk out with them and stayed on, helping the paper save face in one of the most embarrassing episodes in its history. In 1989 and 1990, I won the most prestigious professional journalism awards the *Washington Times* has ever won, the Distinguished Writing Awards of the American Society of Newspaper Editors for editorial writing. My twice-weekly column was a popular feature that appeared every Tuesday and Friday for four years in the *Times*' Commentary and op-ed pages, and its disappearance has cost the paper readers.

I served the *Times* as an editorial writer and junior editor from 1986 to 1991. In May of the latter year, Pruden offered me the position of staff columnist, writing two signed columns and two unsigned editorials a week under the new editorial page editor, Tod Lindberg. For the next two years my column, which gained national syndication in November 1991, appeared in the Commentary section of the *Times* and, as the Washington *Media Guide* reported the next year, as a columnist I "quickly established [my]self as a force."

When I began the column, I knew what I wanted it to be—a hardball expression of paleoconservative principles that would not hesitate to criticize the mainstream right and the general political and cultural direction of the country. I had no interest in rewriting Republican Party press releases or booming the idols of neoconservative or movement conservative adoration. I also wanted to broach a variety of issues from a perspective that was seldom heard in the press—immigration, trade policy, questions of globalism and national sovereignty, post-Cold War foreign policy, race, and American conservatism in general. I have, some tell me, a gift for sarcasm, and I did not hesitate to use it.

I understood that there was a risk in what I was planning, that I would be stepping on a great many toes and pushing the boundaries that surround the fashionable dogmas of both the Washington right and left, boundaries the *Times* seems petrified of transgressing. But Wes had assured me when he made me a columnist that I would have a much freer rein than I had as an editorial writer, and I cannot say I found this to be untrue.

In September 1993, the paper's Commentary section underwent a reorganization. It lost one of its three regular pages of opinion pieces, and a separate op-ed page was created that would carry opinion pieces from outside writers as well as those of the three staff columnists. The editor of the new op-ed page would be Tod Lindberg, who continued to run the editorial page as well.

If Hillary Clinton is a "congenital liar," Tod Lindberg is a congenital neoconservative. In his college days at the University of Chicago, he studied with the late neoconservative guru Allan Bloom and, perhaps more significantly, was the roommate of John Podhoretz, son of neoconservative czar Norman Podhoretz and by 1991 an editor at the *Times* himself. Tod had previously worked as an editor at the neoconservative journals *The Public Interest* and *The National Interest*, both founded by the other neocon heavy, Irving Kristol, whom Tod once described to me as his "mentor." As for Tod's view of the paleoconservatives, in a recent interview with Washington's *City Paper*, he called their ideas "horsesh-t." Thus speaks the "official voice of the conservative movement."

Despite the obvious divergence between our views of conservatism, I got along well with Tod in the four years I wrote editorials under him. He was a remarkably easy editor to work and write for. He never held editorial staff meetings, did not require writers to stay in the office after meeting their deadlines, and seldom altered what I submitted for the page.

As for Wes Pruden, a notoriously aloof editor, I had little contact with him. Other than grunted greetings from him in passing (sometimes not even that), I had no conversations with him at all between the time he made me a columnist in 1991 and the day he canned me in 1995. My talk with him on the latter occasion was the longest I ever had, and that seems to resemble the experience of most writers and reporters at the paper.

The son of a Baptist minister in Little



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Rock who was the leader of the segregationist Citizen's Council during the city's 1957 desegregation crisis, Pruden writes a regular column for the paper that often defends the Confederate Flag and the Southern heritage and displays a taste for ethnic rabbit punches (only a few days after he fired me for expressing views he claimed to find "racially insensitive" and "offensive," he published a column in which Louis Farrakhan's Million Man March is characterized as "The Shuck and Jive to Terrify the Mind").

But though Wes is a competent wordsmith, his column is essentially shallow, offering little more than invective directed against the usual targets of liberal Democrats and the Establishment media. A conservative columnist once described what Wes does in his column as "nothing more than picking out a couple of liberal Democrats every week and engaging in Billingsgate about them." For all his chest-thumping about Southern and Christian traditionalism, he's careful to avoid sniffing out the wrong ideological fire hydrants.

A fervent proponent of Zionism, Wes wrote in his column in 1989 that the Israelis are "adrift in a sea of 400 million murderous fanatics," a line that had Arab embassies in Washington threatening to cut off press relations with the paper's foreign desk. During the Persian Gulf War, he accused columnist Joe Sobran, an outspoken paleoconservative critic of the adventure, of harboring "dark motives," called him an "embittered Israel-baiter," and said Sobran "skirts close to sedition" in his opposition to the war. After the United States' victory in the war, Wes inaugurated a running feature in the paper's Life section, then edited by John Podhoretz, called the "Hall of Shame," which week after week reprinted criticism of the Gulf expedition from paleo and liberal columnists, including Sobran and Pat Buchanan, to hold them up to ridicule.

The *Times* buys Sobran's syndicated column, but by Pruden's personal command seldom publishes a writer who is one of the most gifted in American journalism, and while Buchanan's column was always the lead feature in the Commentary section before his 1992 presidential campaign, after his return to journalism, and again by Pruden's command, it began running below the fold. How much of Wes' zest in chopping at paleoconservatives is due to his own personal beliefs and how much comes from what he figures is in his interest remains unclear, but what is clear is that anyone on the neoconservatives' enemies list quickly shows up on his. It's also clear that his outrage at racial "insensitivities" is highly selective; Arabs and pro-Farrakhan blacks are just as much fair game for his journalistic backhand as paleoconservatives critical of Israel.

Yet despite my ideological differences with Tod and despite the lack of personal rapport with him or Wes, I had no reason to believe I faced a problem with either. Wes had made me a columnist, and I regarded his professions of Southern loyalties as a sign that he was an ally, if not a fan. In 1993, Wes commented in a memo to me, "I consider your column an adornment to our pages," and in March 1994 I received an annual assessment from Tod (the only "annual assessment" I had in the four years of working under him) that gave me 13 "fives" (the highest grading) out of 20 categories of job performance (I also received six "fours" and one "three," both of them high or satisfactory gradings). In an assessment question asking about the "employee's strengths," Tod wrote that I "write a mean column; the editorials are always delicious as well." Various senior editors and colleagues at the paper also offered praise for specific columns. I was fully aware that there were those at the paper who didn't like my column, and I occasionally heard from them too, but I never heard any criticism from an editor.

By the middle of 1995, I believed I had established myself as a Washington columnist who wrote a unique, controversial, but popular feature. My syndication was prospering, and I found myself quoted more and more often by other writers. I received an increasing number of speaking invitations and an ever-growing body of fan mail. I sometimes worried about the future of the newspaper, which still does not make a profit after 13 years of subsidization by its owners, but I had absolutely no worries about losing my position and maintained cordial if distant relations with the local authorities.

On June 28 of last year, this euphoria came to an abrupt end. The day before, I had published a column blasting the Southern Baptist Convention for adopting a resolution expressing "repentance" for its historic support of Southern slavery. I argued that it made no sense in Christian theology for individuals to "repent" of a sin they had not personally committed and that in any case there is no evidence that owning slaves is a sin in traditional (or fundamentalist) Christian theology. Indeed, I wrote, there are at least five clear passages in the letters of Paul that explicitly enjoin "servants" to obey their masters, and the Greek words for "servants" in the original text are identical to those for "slaves." Neither Jesus nor the Apostles nor the early church condemned slavery, despite countless opportunities to do so, and there is no indication that slavery is contrary to Christian ethics or that any serious theologian before modern times ever thought it was. The point was to argue that the Baptists seemed to be motivated by a desire to accommodate themselves to modern political sensibilities rather than by serious religious or ethical precepts, and that this trend did not augur well for the future of the traditionally conservative denomination.

The column set off a few bombshells, and some writers at the paper took me to task for it. I learned from one reporter that he heard Jack Kemp angrily denouncing the column and me at a reception the night after its appearance. As for readers, some called to tell me they thought the column was "brilliant," while one lady informed me it made her "want to vomit." Well, all in a day's work, I figured; the day passed, and I forgot about it.

The next afternoon, Wednesday, June 28, I was told that Tod wanted to see me in his office. Upon entering, he told me to sit down and without prelude informed me that after conversations with Wes they had decided the paper no longer wanted to sponsor my column as a staff column, that from that moment on I was no longer a staff columnist, and that my salary was being reduced by half. I could continue as an editorial writer, and the paper would carry my column as a syndicated feature. I had 24 hours to accept this proposal or resign from the paper.

Thunderstruck is not exactly the word for my reaction. I asked Tod what problems the paper had with my column, and he replied (as I recall) it was the style, subject, contents, themes, ideas, and just about everything else except the anchovies. My first thought was that this was not only a calculated insult but also an invitation to leave. I protested that I thought it was grotesquely unfair (to which he replied, "Oh, it's perfectly fair") but told him I had no choice but to



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accept. But even as I left his office I was determined to quit the paper as soon as possible.

Later in the day I got to see the wizard himself and had a little chat with Wes. A stolid man by habit, Wes tried to muster some anger with me. He asked me if I didn't know that we live in a city with a majority black population, told me that I was "just too insensitive" to black concerns, that I "just went too far," and that my column about the Baptists "could only be read as a defense of slavery" (it was not). I hadn't realized grown men really talked seriously in this way, but I told him that neither he nor Tod had ever expressed any displeasure with my column, that no one had objected to the column before it was published, and that it had been published without alterations and in a prominent place above the fold of the page. If Tod had a problem with it, why hadn't I heard about it before it was published, and if it was so offensive why was it published at all? I also told him that the 50 percent reduction of my salary threatened to leave me financially strapped, that I had had only one annual assessment from Tod since starting work under him four years before, and that he had not expressed any dissatisfaction with my column or any other aspect of my work and conduct.

Wes grumbled that he would look into the salary matter. The next day I got a note from Tod telling me they were willing to raise my salary to 75 percent of what it had been if I agreed to write three editorials a week instead of two. I had no choice but to accept this increased workload at a lower salary, but even the increase still left me at a pay level less than my starting salary in 1986. By now it was Thursday afternoon, and my Friday column, ordinarily published on Tod's op-ed page, did not appear. For the first time in four years the paper carried no column by me on the day of its regular publication.

Many of my readers sniffed trouble and started calling to ask why my column hadn't appeared on June 30. In the weeks that followed, when the column inexplicably moved to the Commentary section and my tagline dropped the description of me as a staff columnist, word that something bad had happened began to seep out. Various conservative newsletters, activist groups, and talk show hosts began muttering about it. I started receiving copies of letters from readers to Wes expressing support for me and the column and often copies of his replies to them. There began to be talk of boycotts, demonstrations in front of the paper, and letter writing campaigns. I actively discouraged talk of any action against the paper, and I never asked anyone to write a letter to Wes or anyone else, but they did anyway. As of this date, I have copies of more than 50 such letters, and Wes later told me he had received "more than a hundred letters" expressing support for me. Apparently this made no difference to him.

At the end of August, Wes dispatched a blunt memorandum to me, snorting that Whoever is running the letter campaign should get his facts straight. "The messages to my office are all over the ballpark. Each correspondent is getting a reply considerably more polite than most deserve, and I make the point that if these correspondents actually admire you and your work, as they insist they do, they should not spread lies about you. You have told me that you are not a party to this, and I am glad to hear it."

Why he sent this memo other than to suggest that I was somehow orchestrating a letter writing campaign I don't understand, and I wrote him back to reiterate that I had never asked anyone to write or call him on my behalf. I also told him that in the copies of the letters I had received, "I have not seen anything that could be called a lie. . . . Why would I be party to a campaign to spread lies about myself? If lies are being spread, I would like to know what they are and who is telling them."

It soon became apparent who was telling lies. When one reader wrote Wes with the precise facts, that I was no longer described as a staff columnist and that the location of my column in the paper had changed, Wes replied by saying "I don't know where you are getting your nutty misinformation" and assured him that I continued as "an editorial writer for the *Times*, which is a position of highest prestige within our organization." This was the general line he followed in responding to the letters, virtually denying that my status at the paper had changed and insisting in a form letter that "the voice of Sam Francis is as vibrant as ever, his column appears prominently in the *Washington Times*, as it has from the beginning, and he continues to contribute editorials as a valued member of the editorial page staff." Those replies of his that I have seen are almost invariably curt to the point of rudeness, disingenuous if not outright dishonest, and often misspelled or ungrammatical. They almost never answer the writers' questions and often wind up telling them it's none of their business anyway. In at least one letter (to Jared Taylor) he explicitly said that the change of my column's placement within the newspaper "was not a result of his column on the Southern Baptists' apology for slavery" and wrote that "to describe this [my dismissal as a staff columnist and the drastic reduction of my salary] as 'firing' a columnist is truly bizarre." He also emitted dark hints of a conspiracy. "Someone," he wrote ominously, "is trying to do a job on Sam." Some readers were taken in by this, and they wrote me asking what the real truth was.

By the end of the summer, I was still on the payroll, though I figured my days were numbered, and I had lost any desire to stay anyway. After nine years of professional success at the paper, I had been smacked in the face and was only a few steps away from financial distress. As for the "job on Sam," it seemed to proceed briskly. I undertook writing three editorials a week plus my two syndicated columns and developed my plans to get the hell out of Dodge. But unknown to me at the time, others were also developing similar plans for me, though not for quite the same reason.

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## RELIGION

# Politicized Christianity

***by Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr.***

On a recent Sunday, my church bulletin ran this edifying announcement: "Is cutting health, income assistance, nutrition and safety guarantees of millions of children and shredding the national safety net for children the kind of reform we support? Call President Clinton to let him know what you are for. 'I was hungry, thirsty, homeless, sick



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and you . . . '" So Our Lord and the welfare state are on the same side. Funny, I don't recall Him telling the Roman authorities to extend the grain dole to Judea, or Zacheus to go and collect more taxes to make it possible.

Today, the social democracy gospel is not only the mainstream opinion among the ecclesiastical elites. It is the prevailing orthodoxy of virtually every organized religious body in the United States. This represents a repudiation of history. For example, the Catholic tradition is steeped in the defense of private property, localism, and, with the neo-Scholastics, antisocialist economic thought. But today, American bishops hold press conferences to denounce any cuts in welfare. God, they assure us, opposes the balanced budget, and the press packs the room to take down every word.

The bishops—unaware or indifferent to their use by a secular elite that despises Christianity—love the attention. They also like the fact that political campaigning gives them an excuse not to do what they are supposed to do.

While the bishops are politicking, virtually every parish in the country is sinking deeper into the mire of modernism, with liberal liturgies, rampaging feminism, awful music, and doctrinal confusion and ignorance. Even blasphemy is no longer rare. Yet the far-flung political activities of the leaders only seem to grow, and the problem is not limited to the left. The right is in danger from the same model of political activism, as it neglects the faith itself. In some religious institutions, the leaders understand the priority that the City of God must take over the City of Man. In others, however—and I am thinking now of the Christian Coalition, the established pro-life organizations, and the U.S. Bishops Conference—they do not. For these leaders, the faith has become a means to an essentially secular project, involving heavy doses of political and doctrinal compromise.

Before the Christian right decides to replace the Apostles Creed with the Contract with the American Family, it should consider the associated dangers. Once the social gospel became a tenet of mainline Christianity, the entire body of doctrine began to fall apart, and the consequences were destructive for both Protestants and Catholics. Christians came to believe that their first job was public policy. They looked toward the state and incorporated specific political doctrines into their body of belief.

Consider the entanglement of Christians in civil rights. The primary concern of the founders and funders of the civil rights movement was not faith or justice, but envy and egalitarianism. Yet they knew that their best hope was to cloak hatred and raw state power in religion, and hope that Christians could not tell the difference.

For too many it worked, and Stanley Levison is the reason. As David Garrow reports, Levison was Martin Luther King's control. He wrote King's books and speeches and managed his finances, even paying his personal bills (which King could not be trusted to do). Yet Levison was also a communist, a probable agent of the KGB, and a rich benefactor of communist causes. He was also extremely smart.

Religious imagery was the mainstay of Levison's vocabulary, and he was a master of quoting Scripture to make political points. As a result, many noncommunist followers of King did not know what was behind this apparent man of God.

The social gospel movement, culminating in the civil rights movement, succeeded, of course, causing Christians to incorporate Levisonianism as a key moral teaching. The Catholic bishops—who otherwise have almost junked the sacrament of penance—now tell Catholics to confess the sin of racism, whatever that may be. The Evangelical group Promise Keepers lists love of all races among its six rules for living.

Meanwhile, leaders of the Christian right will talk on television and radio for hours about the destructive effect of welfare, abortion, etc. But they do not seem to understand the corruptions associated with the City of Man, nor the danger of neglecting the core concerns of the faith.

The entry of orthodox Christians into the public square may, for the most part, have been good for the country; but it may not have been good for Christianity. A fine example of the problem is a recent issue of the *American Enterprise* magazine. It features short profiles and interviews with some 60 different religious conservatives. There are good people here, and perhaps the trouble with the interviews can be blamed on the editors or the forum. Every person had provocative statements to make about public policy or the charitable missions he is undertaking to make up for the failures of the welfare state. But what is strangely underplayed, or lacking entirely, is the faith. There's virtually no talk of salvation, grace, sacraments, or sin. Moreover, there's no discussion about the disastrous state of the church today, theologically, liturgically, and musically.

Apparently, things like the salvation of individual souls are concerns for Neanderthals. Moderns, to be in vogue with the media elite, are supposed to be more public-spirited than that. They are first to take positions on the welfare state, vouchers, abortion rights, the death penalty, the balanced budget, the family cap, etc.

But this is a trap. Religious leaders can and should speak on matters of politics, but filling the public square with collared policy wonks is not the reason the church was established. The clergy's preeminent job is to tend to the private space of the church, where the sacraments are administered and the soul cared for. And it is this space that is being neglected, with disastrous results.

What led to Christian conservatives getting stuck in this trap? Many have Lincoln envy and King envy. Those political figures used religion to advance a social cause, and became national icons in the process. Why can't the religious right achieve the same status with other social issues? Thus Ralph Reed compares himself to abolitionists or civil rights protesters and thinks he is confounding his critics. In fact, he is only strengthening the social gospel and thereby corrupting the faith.

Political work is necessary, but it can never replace the intellectual and spiritual efforts that sustain a robust faith, a virtuous clergy, a beautiful liturgy, great music, or any of the other markings of the Christian faith of old. And I do not care how many ten-point plans the Christian Coalition passes at its board meetings. They can never substitute for an orthodox view of the Trinity.

Yet Christianity is now thoroughly politicized. The bishops and Mr. Reed have no trouble speaking about the importance of pro-family legislation, or the glories of religious pluralism, but they are shy about such basics as the Christian teaching on salvation.

The longer the process of politicization continues, the thinner the faith gets. Political ambition causes people to water down their beliefs for the sake of gaining favor. The hazard is especially prevalent in a society with competing religions. The first stage of the sellout comes with the exaltation of political pluralism



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above doctrinal truth, the second stage with the denial of doctrinal truth altogether for achieving political goals.

Richard John Neuhaus provided us with a classic example last year. His magazine *First Things* printed a long manifesto signed by prominent Protestants and Catholics. In page after page, it chronicled our troubles with family breakup, crime, declining respect for authority, growing permissiveness toward sexual deviance, the public schools, etc. There was truth in much of it. But then there was a surprise ending, and some of the signers claim to have missed it. The signers pledged themselves not to engage in "sheep stealing," that is, proselytization.

Yet there are real differences between Catholics and Protestants, and they are larger than mere subjective preference. No social crisis should be allowed to drive either side to promise, for example, not to bring up the nature of the Eucharist. If we do put aside essential beliefs to improve, it is said, the social order, where do we draw the line? Should we agree with "socially conservative" Muslims not to discuss the divinity of Christ?

Politicization has had an especially pernicious effect on the Catholic faith. In our times, the problems began with Vatican II. Its documents were highly political, and they precipitated three decades of liturgical and theological disaster. Why didn't conservatives protest? Some did. But many more did not, on grounds that they wanted to support *Humanae Vitae*, Paul VI's letter on abortion and birth control. Conservatives hung onto this document for dear life. Eventually, the Catholic right came to focus on the single issue of abortion, and developed an enormous industry to do it.

During the welfare debate, Republicans faced some fierce opposition to the idea of cutting off subsidies to women who have children out of wedlock. Initially, the opposition came from the left. But it was National Right to Life, in conjunction with the bishops, that defeated the idea. The reasoning was that the women might abort their children if they were not paid to have them.

The Family Research Council desperately tried to explain that cutting off subsidies was an essential precursor to changing the lewd culture that governs the inner city. But National Right to Life merely expressed shock that any pro-lifer would disagree on welfare for single mothers. With that, it became clear that the pro-life establishment had joined the forces of socialism.

One wonders how far they will take this. Suppose someone introduced legislation to have the federal government pay $100,000 for every live birth. Would pro-lifers support that too? Thirty years ago, no. They would have understood there were other principles at stake. But today, they are afflicted with such myopia that they would surely say yes.

The Catholic bishops, too, mix their pro-life agenda with leftism, speaking, for example, of their duty to defend the "unborn and the undocumented." In their recent "statement on Political Responsibility," the bishops pledged themselves to the "continued defense of human life as the 'preeminent human rights issue of our day,' strongly opposing abortion and euthanasia." They went on to call for a ban on "anti-personnel landmines," an end to the death penalty, more affirmative action, more government jobs, more environmentalism, more Food Stamps, and more socialized medicine that "respects life." They also oppose "anti-immigrant sentiment," "isolationism," abortion, and handguns.

In his recent address to the United Nations, John Paul II called on the organization to "become a moral center where all the nations of the world feel at home and develop a shared awareness of being." But didn't Christians once believe that the moral center of nations, and the shared awareness among all people, was the Church itself?

In her speech before the United Nations, Mother Teresa took a different route. She related how often people ask her how they can do what she does. She tells them: Don't do what I do. Do what *you* are supposed to do. Be a good father and worker. Be a good mother to your own children. Be responsible for those in your care.

That is advice the Church needs as well. Christians do not need to leave political activism, although some leaders of the prominent groups represent as great a danger as any secular opponents. But Christians should not proclaim themselves as religious people tired of sitting in the back of the bus, and follow Rosa Parks in demanding their rights as a special-interest group.

Already, our religious leadership seems more interested in press conferences than defending the faith. Conservatives, at least, need to recognize that the essence of their faith cannot be found in the public square, for it is not the source of good families, good theology, authentic liturgy, and loving neighbors, not to speak of eternal life. Conservatives must not pretend to establish a Christian-friendly official culture in Washington, or get government to start subsidizing religious schools as opposed to public schools. Nor can Christians hope to impress the governing elites with the fruits of their religion, except to the extent that they fulfill the designs of that elite. Neither can they hope to gain greater tolerance for the expression of Christian values from a regime that is implacably hostile.

Instead, Christians should hoe their own spiritual row, avoid the temptation to become part of the Leviathan state, and refuse to follow those who would use the faith to curry favor with the central government and the official culture. If Christians have a special interest, it is not prime-time news coverage, but salvation.

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# Evangelicals on the Durham Trail

*by D. G. Hart*

What do Billy Graham and Stanley Fish have in common? According to most assessments of the ongoing culture wars, the answer is an emphatic "not much!" With the exception of a few inconsequential details—both are older white men living in North Carolina—little seems to unite these two figures or the movements for which they have become figureheads. Graham is, of course, the patron saint of American evangelicalism, the one who as an object of admiration or scorn determines what it means to be an evangelical. And Fish, professor of English at Duke University of deconstructionist, postmodernist fame, has become one of the principal cheerleaders for efforts within the academy to make the literary canon specifically, and the humanities more generally, more inclusive and less oppressive. Identified in this way, the constituencies to which Graham and Fish speak would ap-



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pear to be about as far apart as Newt Gingrich and Hillary Clinton.

James Davison Hunter, for instance, argues that evangelicals are a large part of the orthodox constituency which defends the traditional family, opposes political correctness and multiculturalism in the academy, and supports efforts to cut federal funding for objectionable art. This explains why they have lined up in bookstores across the land to buy and read to their children William Bennett's *Book of Virtues*. Thus, evangelicalism, at least in the common configuration of the ongoing culture wars, is the antithesis of the cultural left.

Why is it, then, that when evangelicals retreat from the public square into their houses of worship they manifest the same hostility to tradition, intellectual standards, and good taste they find so deplorable in their opponents in the culture wars? Anyone familiar with the so-called "Praise & Worship" phenomenon (so named, supposedly, to remind participants of what they are doing) would be hard pressed to identify these believers as the party of memory or the defenders of cultural conservatism. P&W has become the dominant mode of expression within evangelical churches, from conservative Presbyterian denominations to low church independent congregations. What characterizes this "style" of worship is the praise song ("four words, three notes and two hours") with its mantra-like repetition of phrases from Scripture, displayed on an overhead projector or video monitors (for those churches with bigger budgets), and accompanied by the standard pieces in a rock band.

Gone are the hymnals which keep the faithful in touch with previous generations of saints. They have been abandoned, in many cases, because they are filled with music and texts considered too boring, too doctrinal, and too restrained. What boomers and busters need instead, according to the liturgy of P&W, are a steady diet of religious ballads, most of which date from the 1970's, the decade of disco, leisure suits, and long hair. Gone too are the traditional elements of Protestant worship, the invocation, confession of sins, the creed, the Lord's Prayer, the doxology, and the Gloria Patri. Again, these elements are not sufficiently celebrative or "dynamic," the favorite word used to describe the new worship. And while P&W has retained the talking head in the sermon, probably the most boring element of Protestant worship, the substance of much preaching turns out to be more therapeutic than theological.

Of course, evangelicals are not the only ones guilty of abandoning the treasures of historic Protestant worship. Various churches in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Missouri Synod have begun to experiment with contemporary worship. The traditionalists in Reformed circles, if the periodical *Reformed Worship* is any indication, have also begun to incorporate P&W in their services. And Roman Catholics, one of the genuine conservative constituencies throughout American history, have contributed to the mix with the now infamous guitar and polka mass. Yet, judging on the basis of worship practices, evangelicals look the most hypocritical. For six days a week they trumpet traditional values and the heritage of the West, but on Sunday they turn out to be the most novel. Indeed, the patterns of worship that prevail in most evangelical congregations suggest that these Protestants are no more interested in tradition than their archenemies in the academy.

A variety of factors, many of which stem from developments in post-1960's American popular culture, unite evangelicalism and the cultural left. In both movements, we see a form of anti-elitism that questions any distinction between good and bad (or even not so good), or between what is appropriate and inappropriate. Professors of literature have long been saying that the traditional literary canon was the product, or better, the social construction, of a particular period in intellectual life that preserved the hegemony of white men, but which had no intrinsic merit. In other words, because aesthetic standards turn out to be means of sustaining power, there is no legitimate criteria for including some works and excluding others.

The same sort of logic can be found across the country at weeknight worship planning committee meetings. It is virtually impossible to make the case—without having your hearers go glassy-eyed—that "Of the Father's Love Begotten" is a better text and tune than "Shine, Jesus, Shine," and, therefore, that the former is fitting for corporate worship while the latter should remain confined to Christian radio. In the case of evangelicals, the inability to make distinctions between good and bad poetry and music does not stem so much from political ideology (though it ends up abetting the cause) as from the deeply ingrained instinct that worship is simply a matter of evangelism. Thus, in order to reach the unchurched, the churched have to use the former's idiom and style. What is wrong with this picture?

The traditionalists are of no help here. Rather than trying to hold the line on what is appropriate and good in worship, most of those who are devoted full-time to thinking about liturgy and worship, the door-keepers of the sanctuary as it were, have generally adopted a "united-colors-of-Benetton" approach to the challenge of contemporary worship. For instance, a recent editorial in a Reformed publication says that the old ways—the patterns which used Buxtehude rather than Bill Gaither, "Immortal, Invisible" rather than "Do Lord," a Genevan gown instead of a Polo shirt—have turned out to be too restrictive. Churches need to expand their worship "repertoire." The older predilection was "white, European, adult, classical, with a strong resonance from the traditional concert hall." But this was merely a preference and reflection of a specific "education, socio-economic status, ethnic background, and personality." Heaven forbid that anyone should appear to be so elitist. For the traditional "worship idiom" can become "too refined, cultured, and bloodless . . . too arrogant." Instead, we need to encourage the rainbow coalition—"of old and young, men and women, red and yellow, black and white, classical and contemporary." And the reason for this need of diversity? It is simply because worship is the reflection of socioeconomic status and culture. Gone is any conviction that one liturgy is better than another because it conforms to revealed truth and the order of creation, or that one order of worship is more appropriate than another for the theology which a congregation or denomination confesses. Worship, like food or clothes, is merely a matter of taste. Thus the logic of multiculturalism has infected even those concerned to preserve traditional liturgy.

Yet when one looks for genuine diversity in worship, multiculturalism—again, the great leveler of tradition and cultural standards—offers up a very thin band of liturgical expression. Advocates of diversity do not seem to be very interested in the way "the people" have worshiped in the past. Is there, for instance, any real effort among the various experiments



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in worship to recover the Psalm singing of the Puritans, the simple and spontaneous meetings of Quakers, the hymnody of German pietism, the folk traditions of the Amish, the revival songs of Ira Sankey and Dwight L. Moody, or the spirituals of African-American Protestants? The answer, of course, is no. For these expressions of Protestant piety, even though originating from some groups which would hardly qualify as elites, are no better than the liturgies from the Lutheran, Anglican, and Reformed establishments. What the P&W crowd really wants is a very narrow range of musical and lyrical expression, one which conforms to its admittedly limited worship "repertoire."

Indeed, contemporary worship—and church life—depends increasingly on the products of popular culture, from its musical mode of expression, the liturgical skits which ape TV sitcoms, and the informal style of ministers which follows the antics of late-night TV talk show hosts. Thus, just as the academic left advocates including Madonna and *Leave It to Beaver* in the canon, so the evangelical champions of contemporary worship turn to popular culture—primarily contemporary music and television programming—for the content and order of worship. This is remarkable for a Christian tradition that once found its identity in avoiding all forms of worldliness and that continues to rail against the products of Hollywood and the excesses of the music industry. Yet, as in the case of the cultural left, we are seeing a generation that grew up on TV and top-40 radio stations now assuming positions of leadership in the churches. And what they want to surround themselves with in worship, as in the classroom, is what is familiar and easily accessible. Rather than growing up and adopting the broader range of experience that characterizes adulthood, evangelicals and the academic left want to recover and perpetuate the experiences of adolescence.

In fact, what stands out about P&W is the aura of teenage piety. Anyone who has endured a week at one of the evangelical summer youth camps that dot the landscape will be struck by the similarity between P&W and the services in which adolescents participate while out of their parents' hair. The parallels are so close that one is tempted to call P&W the liturgy of the youth rally. For in the meetings of Young Life, Campus Crusade for Christ, or Bible camp are all the elements of P&W: the evangelical choruses, the skit, and the long talk by the youthful speaker calling for dedication and commitment to Christ. While these youth ministries are effective in evoking the mountain-top or campfire-side experience, they rarely provide the sustenance upon which a life of sacrifice and discipline depends. Yet, P&W is attractive precisely because it appears to offer weekly the spiritual recharge that before came only once a year. Consequently, many megachurches that follow the P&W format thrive because they help many people recover or sustain the religious experience of youth.

Some may wonder what is wrong with assisting adults to perpetuate the emotions and memories that sustain religious devotion. The problem is that such experiences and the worship from which they spring is concerned primarily with affect. One searches in vain through the praise songs, the liturgical dramas, or the sermon/inspirational talk for an adequate expression of the historic truths of the faith. It is as if the content of worship or the object which elicits the religious experience does not really matter. As long as people are lifting up and swaying their arms, tilting back their heads and closing their eyes, then the Spirit must be present and the worship genuine.

What is ironic about contemporary worship is that its form is almost always the same even while claiming that older worship is too repetitive. Another standard complaint about "traditional" worship is that it is too formal. Evangelicals believe that God is never limited by outward means. Believers who rely upon set liturgies or who repeat written prayers, some charge, are merely "going through the motions." Real faith and worship cannot be prescribed. Yet, for all of the attempts by the practitioners of P&W to avoid routine and habit, hence boredom, contemporary worship never seems to escape its own pop culture formula. Again, the songs are basically the same in musical structure and lyrical composition, the order of the service—while much less formal—rarely changes, and the way in which people express their experience demonstrates remarkable unity (e.g., the arms, the head, the eyes). This hostility to form and the inability to think about the ways in which certain habits of expression are more or less appropriate for specific settings or purposes is what finally puts evangelicalism and the academic left on the same side in the culture war. For the idea that the autonomous individual must find his own meaning or experience of reality for himself ends up making such individuals unwilling to follow and submit to the forms, habits, and standards that have guided a community or culture. Besides the fact that the radical individualism of modern culture has bred as much conformity as human history has ever known, evangelicals and the academic left continue to buck tradition in the hope of finding the true self capable of experiencing religion or life at its most genuine or authentic.

What evangelicals who prefer P&W to older liturgies share with academics who teach Louis L'Amour instead of Shakespeare is an inability to see the value of restraint, habit, and form. Evangelicals and the academic left believe that we need to be liberated from the past, from formalism, and from existing structures in order to come into a more intimate relationship with life or the divine. This is really quite astounding in the case of evangelicals whose public reputation depends upon defending traditional morality. Yet, the effort to remove all barriers to the expression and experience of the individual self is unmistakably present in the efforts to make worship more expressive and spontaneous. This impulse in evangelical worship repudiates the wisdom of various Christian traditions which, rather than trying to liberate the self in order to experience greater intimacy with God, hold that individuals, because of a tendency to sin and commit idolatry, need to conform to revealed and ordered patterns of faith and practice. The traditions which Presbyterians follow, for instance, are not done to throttle religious experience but rather as the prescribed means of communing with God and his people. These means were not arbitrarily chosen by John Calvin and John Knox. Rather Presbyterians have conducted public and family worship in specific ways because they believe worship should conform to God's revealed truth. But just as the academic left has abandoned the great works of Western civilization because of a desire for relevance in higher education, so evangelicals have rejected the various elements and forms which have historically informed Protestant worship, again, because they are boring to today's youth.

Antiformalism also explains the stress upon novelty and freshness so often found in P&W. The leader of worship



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planning at one of the dominant megachurches says, for instance, on a video documenting a P&W service, that she is always looking for new ways to order the midweek believer's service so that church members will not fall into a rut. She goes on to say that people are often tired, having worked all day (an argument for worshiping on Sunday) and need something that will arrest their attention and put them in a proper frame of mind. This perspective, however, fundamentally misunderstands the relationship between form and worship. C. S. Lewis had it right when he said that a worship service "'works' best when, through long familiarity, we don't have to think about it." "The perfect church service," he added, "would be the one we were almost unaware of; our attention would have been on God. But every novelty prevents this. It fixes our attention on the service itself; and thinking about worship is a different thing from worshipping. . . . 'Tis mad idolatry that makes the service greater than the god.' A still worse thing may happen. Novelty may fix our attention not even on the service but on the celebrant." But this is precisely what has happened in P&W, where the service and elements are designed to attract attention themselves rather than functioning as vehicles for expressing adoration to God. Lewis knew that repetition and habit were better guides to the character of worship than novelty and manipulation. In fact, one does not need to be a professor of liturgics to sense that the idiom of Valley Girls is far less fitting for a believer to express love for God than the language of the *Book of Common Prayer*. Such an instinct only confirms the wise comment of the Reformed theologian Cornelius Van Til, who while preferring Presbyterian liturgy still remarked that "at least in an Episcopalian service no one says anything silly."

But even to criticize contemporary worship, to accuse it of bad taste or triviality, is almost as wicked as smoking in public. Arguments against P&W are usually taken personally, becoming an affront to the feelings of contemporary worshipers. Which is to say that the triumph of P&W, like the ascendancy of the cultural left in the academy, is firmly rooted in our therapeutic culture. The most widely used reason for contemporary worship is that it is what the people want and what makes them feel good. Again, just as there are no intellectual standards for expanding the literary canon to include romance novels, so there are no theological criteria for practicing P&W. But there are plenty of examples that show that if we give people what they are familiar with, whether sitcoms in the classroom or soft rock in church, they will feel comfortable and come back for more. As David Rieff has noted, the connections between the therapeutic and the market are formidable. So if we can expand our worship or academic repertoire to include the diversity of the culture we will no doubt increase our audience.

This is why P&W services are also called "seeker-sensitive." They are part of a self-conscious effort to attract a larger market for the church. Yet, while evangelicalism may have a large market share, its consumer satisfaction may also be low, especially if it deceives people into thinking they have really worshiped God when they have actually been worshiping their emotions. Thus, once again, evangelical worship turns out to be as deceptive as the academic left which tells students that the study of Batman comics is just as valuable as the study of Henry James.

Of course, anyone who knows the history of American evangelicalism should not be surprised by P&W. In fact, Billy Graham's recent inclusion of Christian Hip Hop and Rap bands in his crusades is of a piece with evangelical history more generally. (It also differs little from his efforts in the 1970's, seldom remembered, to appeal to the Jesus People. With lengthy locks, an inch over the shirt collar, and long sideburns, Graham said, playing off Timothy Leary's famous psychedelic slogan, "Tune in to God, then turn on . . . drop out—of the materialistic world. The experience of Jesus Christ is the greatest trip you can take.") As R. Laurence Moore argues in *Selling God*, since the arrival of Boy George in the American colonies, George Whitefield that is, evangelicals have been unusually adept at packaging and marketing Christianity in the forms of popular culture. The intention of Protestant revivalism was "to save souls, but in a brassy way that threw religion into a free-for-all competition for people's attention." Revivalism, in fact, according to Moore, "shoved American religion into the marketplace of culture" and became "entangled in controversies over commercial entertainments which they both imitated and influenced."

Seldom have evangelicals recognized that this commitment to making the gospel accessible deforms and trivializes Christianity, making it no better than any other commodity exchanged on the market. As H. L. Mencken pointed out about Billy Sunday, evangelicalism "quickly disarms the old suspicion of the holy clerk and gets the discussion going on the familiar and easy terms of the barroom." Mencken went on to say that evangelicalism is marked "by a contemptuous disregard of the theoretical and mystifying" and reduces "all the abstrusities of Christian theology to a few and simple and (to the ingenious) self-evident propositions," making of religion "a practical, an imminent, an everyday concern." Thus, the pattern of evangelical practice shows a long history of being hostile to the more profound liturgies, prayers, and hymns which God's people have expressed throughout the ages.

The reason for this hostility, of course, is that these traditional forms of expressing devotion to God are not sufficiently intelligible to outsiders. But in an effort to reach the unchurched, just as the university has abandoned its mission in order to reach the uneducated, evangelicals have reversed the relationship between the church and the world. Rather than educating outsiders or seekers so they may join God's people in worship, or rather than educating the illiterate so they may join the conversation of the West, we now have the church and the academy employing as its language the idiom of the unchurched and undereducated. In effect, P&W is dumbing down the church at the same time that multiculturalism is dumbing down the university. In the case of P&W the church, by embracing the elements and logic of contemporary worship, has abandoned its task of catechesis. Rather than converting and discipling the seeker, the church now uses the very language and methods of the world. So rather than educating the unbaptized in the language of the household of faith, the church now teaches communicants the language of the world.

Hughes Oliphant Old, in his fine study of worship, concludes with a reflection about mainline Presbyterian worship that applies well to what has transpired in contemporary evangelical churches. "In our evangelistic zeal," he writes, "we are looking for programs that will attract people. We think we have to put honey on the lip of the bitter cup of



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salvation. It is the story of the wedding of Cana all over again but with this difference. At the crucial moment when the wine failed, we took matters into our own hands and used those five stone jars to mix up a batch of Kool-Aid instead." Such is the state of affairs in contemporary evangelical worship. The thin and artificial juice of popular culture has replaced the finely aged and well-crafted drink of the church through the ages. Aside from the merits of the instant drink, it is hardly what you would expect defenders of tradition and the family to choose to serve at a wedding, or at the banquet supper of our Lord. And yet, just as evangelicals in the 19th century substituted Welches for red wine, so a century later they have exchanged the superficial and trivial for the rich forms of historic Protestant worship.

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# Does God Believe in Gun Control?

*by David B. Kopel*

"You are doing God's work," Brady Bill sponsor Charles Schumer remarked to Sarah Brady at a congressional hearing. And perhaps one could argue that if it took God seven days to make the world, people should not be able to buy a handgun in any less time. But did God really support the Brady Bill? One would certainly think so, given the huge number of Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish religious organizations that endorsed the Brady Bill, and which endorse virtually every other gun control proposal.

God's antigun army is prominent not just in Washington, but also in the state legislatures. This year, for example, as legislatures have debated laws allowing licensed, trained citizens to obtain a permit to carry a handgun for protection, some of the most vocal opponents have been religious groups. The state chapter of the National Council of Churches does not show up at legislative hearings armed with criminological data. Instead, persons claiming to testify on behalf of "the religious community" come to express their "moral" opposition to the use of deadly force against criminal attack.

This same worldview is at the heart of the federal ban on so-called "assault weapons," which attempts to distinguish good "sporting" firearms from bad "antipersonnel" weapons. It likewise motivates the publicly announced long-term agenda of Sarah Brady's organization Handgun Control, Inc.: to outlaw possession of firearms for self-defense.

Within the gun control movement, one does not have to dig very far to find the sanctimonious belief that the NRA and its ilk are moral cretins because they believe in answering violence with violence. But is hostility to the lawful use of force for defense the only morally legitimate position? The moral authorities relied on by most Americans suggest otherwise.

The Book of Exodus specifically absolves a homeowner who kills a burglar. (Exodus 22:2, "If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him.") The Sixth Commandment "Thou shalt not kill" refers to murder only, and does not prohibit the taking of life under any circumstances; notably, the law of Sinai specifically *requires* capital punishment for a large number of offenses.

A bit earlier in the Bible, Abram, the father of the Hebrew nation, learns that his nephew Lot has been taken captive. Abram (later to be renamed "Abraham" by God) immediately calls out his trained servants, set out on a rescue mission, finds his nephew's captors, attacks, and routs them, thereby rescuing Lot (Genesis 14:14, "And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan"). The resort to violence to rescue an innocent captive is presented as the morally appropriate choice.

Most gun prohibitionists who look to the Bible for support do not cite specific interdictions of weapons (there are none) but instead point to the general passages about peace and love, such as "That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matthew 5:39); "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you" (Matthew 5:44); and "Recompense to no man evil for evil" (Romans 12:17).

None of these exhortations take place in the context of an imminent threat to life. A slap on the cheek is a blow to pride, but not a threat to life. Reverend Anthony Winfield, author of *Self-Defense and the Bible*, suggests that these verses command the faithful not to seek revenge for evil acts, and not to bear grudges against persons who have done them wrong. He points to the passage "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18), as showing an awareness that in extreme situations, it might not be possible to live in peace.

Further evidence that the New Testament does not command universal pacifism is found in the missions of John the Baptist and Peter, both of whom preached to soldiers who converted. Neither John nor Peter demanded that the soldiers lay down their arms, or find another job (Luke 3:14; Acts 10:22-48).

John told the soldiers "not to extort money and accuse people falsely, just as he told tax collectors not to collect any more than they are required to collect." The plain implication is that being a soldier (or a tax collector) is not itself wrong, so long as the inherent power is not used for selfish purposes.

Of course most gun prohibitionists do not see anything wrong with soldiers carrying weapons and killing people if necessary. But if—as the New Testament strongly implies—it is possible to be a good soldier and a good Christian, then it is impossible to claim that the Gospel *always* forbids the use of violence, no matter what the purpose. The stories of the soldiers support Winfield's thesis that the general "peace and love" passages are not blanket prohibitions on the use of force in all circumstances.

Is an approving attitude toward the bearing of arms confined to professional soldiers? Not at all. At the Last Supper, Jesus' final instructions to the Apostles begin: "When I sent you without purse, and script, and shoes, lacked ye anything?"

"Nothing," the Apostles answer.

Jesus continues: "But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his script and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one." He ends by observing, "This that is written must yet be accomplished." The Apostles then announce, "Lord, behold, here are two swords," and Jesus cuts them off: "It is enough" (Luke 22:35-38). Even if the passage is read with absolute literal-



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ness, Jesus was not setting up a rule that every Apostle *must* carry a sword (or a purse or a bag). For the eleven, two swords were "enough."

More importantly, Jesus may not have been issuing an actual command that anybody carry swords, or purses, or bags. The broader, metaphorical point being made by Jesus was that the Apostles would, after Jesus was gone, have to take care of their own worldly needs to some degree. The purse (generally used for money), the bag (generally used for clothing and food), and the sword (generally used for protection against the robbers who preyed on travelers, including missionaries, in the open country between towns) are all examples of tools used to take care of such needs. When the Apostles took Jesus literally, and started showing him their swords, Jesus, frustrated that they had missed the metaphor, ended the discussion. The metaphorical interpretation is supported by most scholarly analysts.

Even when reduced to metaphor, however, the passage still contradicts the rigid pacifist viewpoint. In the metaphor, the sword, like the purse or the bag, is treated as an ordinary item for any person to carry. If weapons and defensive violence were illegitimate under all circumstances, Jesus would not have instructed the Apostles to carry swords, even in metaphor, any more than Jesus would have created metaphors suggesting that people carry Ba'al statuettes for protection, or that they metaphorically rape, rob, and murder.


• READERS! •

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A few hours after the final instructions to the Apostles, when soldiers arrived to arrest Jesus, and Peter sliced off the ear of one of their leaders, Jesus healed the ear. He then said "Suffer ye thus far" (Luke 22:49-51) or "Put up thy sword into the sheath" (John 18:11) or "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matthew 26:52).

Jesus then rebuked the soldiers for effecting the arrests with clubs and swords, for Jesus was "not leading a rebellion." The most immediate meaning of these passages is that Jesus was preventing interference with God's plan for the arrest and trial. Additionally, Jesus was instructing the Apostles not to begin an armed revolt against the local dictatorship or the Roman imperialists. Jesus had already refused the Zealots' urging to lead a war of national liberation.

Do the passages also suggest a general prohibition against drawing swords (or other weapons) for defense? The versions of the story recounted in Luke and John do not, but the version in Matthew could be so read.

If Matthew is analyzed along the lines of "He who lives by the sword will die by the sword," the passage is an admonition that a person who centers his life on violence (such as a gang member) will perish. On the other hand, a translation of "all who draw the sword will die by the sword" could be read as a general rule against armed violence in any situation.

The best way to understand the Bible, most theologians would concur, is not to look at passages in isolation, but instead to study passages in the context of the rest of the Bible. If the single line in Matthew were said to indicate that to draw the sword is always wrong, then it would be difficult to account for the other passages which suggest that drawing a sword as a soldier (or carrying a sword as an Apostle) is not illegitimate. When examined in context of the Bible as a whole, the passage warns against violence *as a way of life*, rather than as a ban on defensive violence in all situations.

A 1994 document produced by the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace states: "In a world marked by evil and sin, the right of legitimate defense by armed means exists. This right can become a serious duty for those who are responsible for the lives of others, for the common good of the family or of the civil community." The document notes that "the right" to armed defense "is coupled with the duty to do all possible to reduce to a minimum, and indeed eliminate, the causes of violence."

The Catholic Church recognizes people as saints because (among other reasons) their lives are considered worthy of study and emulation. February 27 is the feast day of Saint Gabriel Possenti. According to *The One Year Book of Saints*, as a young man in 19th-century Italy, Francesco Possenti was known as the best dresser in town, as a "superb horseman," and as "an excellent marksman." The young man was also a consummate partyer and was engaged to two women at the same time. Twice during school he had fallen desperately ill, promised to give his life to God if he recovered, and then forgotten his promise. One day at church, Possenti saw a banner of Mary. He felt that her eyes looked directly at him, and he heard the words, "Keep your promise."

Possenti immediately joined an order of monks, taking the name Brother Gabriel. The main incident for which Saint Gabriel Possenti is remembered was this:

> One summer day a little over a hundred years ago, a slim figure in a black cassock [Possenti] stood facing a gang of mercenaries in a small town in Piedmont, Italy. He had just disarmed one of the soldiers who was attacking a young girl, had faced the rest of the band fearlessly, then drove them all out of the village at the point of a gun. . . . [W]hen Garibaldi's mercenaries swept down through Italy ravaging villages, Brother Gabriel showed the kind of man he was by confronting them, astonishing them with his marksmanship, and saving the small village where his monastery was located.

Saint Gabriel Possenti's "astonishing marksmanship" was displayed after he had just disarmed the soldier. The mercenaries' leader told Possenti that it would take more than just one monk



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with a handgun to make the mercenaries leave town. The saint pointed out to the mercenaries a lizard which was running across the road. Possenti shot the lizard right through the head, at which point the mercenaries decided that discretion was the better part of valor; they obeyed Possenti's orders to extinguish the fire they had started and to return the property they had stolen. They then fled the village, never to be heard from again.

Jewish law comes to the same conclusion as the Vatican Pontifical Council: "If someone comes to kill you, rise up and kill him first," commands the Talmud. Bystanders are likewise required to kill persons who are attempting rape. As Columbia University's George Fletcher explains, while there is a duty to self-defense, the duty to defend others is seen as prior.

The view that forcible resistance to evil is itself evil has serious implications: that Patrick Henry and the other Founding Fathers were wrong to urge armed resistance to the British Redcoats; that the Jews who led the Warsaw Ghetto revolt against Hitler were immoral; that Jeffrey Dahmer's victims would have been wrong to use a weapon to protect themselves; that Saint Gabriel Possenti was a paragon of evil; that Abraham should not have rescued his kidnapped nephew; and that police officers who fire their guns to protect innocent people are sinful.

Consider the situation of a mother in a rough neighborhood, moments after an escaped psychopath has broken into her house. The woman has good reason to fear that the intruder is about to slaughter her three children. If she does not shoot him with her .38 Special, the children will be dead before the police arrive. Is the woman's moral obligation to murmur "violence engenders violence," and keep her handgun in the drawer while her children die? Or is the mother's moral *duty* to save her children, and shoot the intruder?

The view that life is a gift from God, and that permitting the wanton destruction of one's own life (or the life of a person under one's care) amounts to hubris is hardly new. As a 1747 sermon in Philadelphia put it: "He that suffers his life to be taken from him by one that hath no authority for that purpose, when he might preserve it by defense, incurs the Guilt of self murder since God hath enjoined him to seek the continuance of his life, and Nature itself teaches every creature to defend itself."

Having read through the Bible several times, I still can't find the parts where God (or even a minor prophet) endorses a handgun waiting period, one-gun-a-month, or any other item in the litany of the antigun lobbies and the religious groups that endorse them. (Nor, of course, is there anything in the Bible implying that these proposals are immoral.) But the idea that pacifism in the face of violent attack against one's family or oneself is some kind of moral imperative that should be enforced by the state is not only missing, it is contrary to common sense and the Western religious tradition. Making it illegal for citizens to own firearms for defense of home and family may or may not be a good idea from a criminological viewpoint—but it is certainly not God's work.

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# The Revival of Russian Paganism

***by Wayne Allensworth***

"The predisposition to religious belief," wrote sociobiologist Edward O. Wilson, "is the most complex and powerful force in the human mind and in all probability an ineradicable part of human nature." Christians would agree with Mr. Wilson, but it is his fellow atheists, not Christians, who have dominated the religious (though not the truly spiritual) life of this unfortunate century. Like Émile Durkheim, modern barbarians see religious ritual as a means of consecrating the group, the party, the class, or the race, the "core of society" as Wilson put it in *On Human Nature*, and not as a liturgical mechanism for mediation with the Almighty. The intoxicating mix of myth and ritual serves to subsume the individual in the collective, to bond him together with other adherents of the secular faith, the Party hierarchy (Orwell's Inner Party) guarding and interpreting the sacred writings of the Prophet (Lenin, Mao, Hitler), the Leader (*Duce, Fuehrer,* or *Vozhd* in the case of Joseph Stalin) himself serving as the High Priest, the remote keeper of the keys. Holy relics (Lenin's mummified corpse comes readily to mind) are put on display and serve as the focus of public rituals. The aura of the mystery of faith is retained.

The 20th century, no less than the time of the Crusades or the turmoil of the Reformation, has been one of religious wars and revolutions. Ideologues of the far left have harnessed humanity's hunger for transcendence to the yoke of a teleological Marxism, with "History" pinch-hitting for God and a communist future as millennium. The far right, without Marxism's convenient pseudo-transcendent underpinnings, has had to fall back on an older cache of symbolism and myth to mobilize the faithful. True, national churches can be useful for mobilization, but only the heroic mythology of paganism can free the race from the fetters of Christianity. Fascism's and Nazism's heroic vitalism, personified in warrior gods and Aryan heroes, was propagated through politicized revivals of paganism, the premodern mythology of the *Volk* or the race. Only the cult of the pagan warrior (as opposed to the Christian knight), so the avatars of neopaganism reasoned, could prepare the people for the brutal actions necessary to ensure the survival of the race in the merciless struggle for biological dominance.

The traumatic events of the last decade have left the Russian people shaken and adrift, and some ideologues of the far right have sought to satiate the religious-ideological thirst of the people (particularly young people) with a heady political brew that disconnects the Russian nationalist impulse from Christianity, substituting a bastardized and politicized heroic neopaganism for traditional religion. The neopagan revival itself can be traced back to the 1960's, when a distinctly different breed of Russian nationalism reared its head, one that was an evolutionary step away from the Stalinist National Bolshevism that had satisfied the religious-tribal imperative within the Russified Soviet Union's elite and dominant nation up to that time. Neopaganism's original prophet was one Valery Skurlatov, who played, and continues to play, the role of philosopher-priest in Russian neopagan circles. Skurlatov popularized the pagan mythology of *The Book of Vlas*, a forgery originally concocted by a Russian émigré, in the Brezhnev-era Soviet press. This chronicle *cum*



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epic depicted a Russian Golden Age in the pre-Christian era, complete with fabricated heroes Skoten and Igor the Elder. The Russians, according to the pagan priests who allegedly authored *Vlas*, were the first Indo-Aryan people, and had spread Aryan culture to Europe. Their enemies the non-Aryans, especially the Jews, had contrived to subjugate the torchbearers of Aryanism, the Russians, since time immemorial. The subtext of Skurlatov's interpretation of ancient Slavdom's history was clear enough: only a revival of the pagan culture of the Golden Age could harden the national fiber for the continuing struggle with the forces of darkness.

Little is actually known about pre-Christian paganism in Russia. The heathen Slavs deified the forces of nature (Perun, the god of thunder and lightning, headed up the pagan pantheon), and animism and ancestor worship appear to have played a part in their hodgepodge of ritual and myth. In any event, only cursory attention is paid by Russia's neopagans to the old gods; one can find plenty of speculation about the mystical power of crystals and pyramids, the predictions of Nostradamus, or the energy fields that allegedly surround the Aryan Russians in the writings of the neopagans, but little concerning the real mythology of the ancient Slavs. Paganism per se is not the point. Those Russians who dress up as ersatz Slavic warriors, sword in hand, and claim to recreate ancient Slavic rituals are not of the same ilk as the New Age channelers or bogus Druids in the West. Russia's far right ideologues' real aim in propagating pseudo-paganism is the same as that of the communists' antireligious propaganda: to eradicate real spiritual faith, particularly Christianity, as the first step toward the revolution they plan. "The baton of proletarian internationalism has been picked up by Christian internationalism," opined one neopagan propagandist. The "total Christianization" of Russian society that he and his ilk fear as a real possibility in the wake of communism's collapse would impede the purification of the race via the extermination of "the wretched and deformed . . . the alcoholic and the drug addict," as well as "cretins, degenerates" and others characterized as "genetic baggage," by weakening the resolve of the people through Christianity's "false humanism." Stalin once offered a critique of the repressive practices of his favorite Czar, Ivan the Terrible, by referring to the anti-Christian policies of the Bolshevik regime. God, according to Stalin, "got in Ivan's way," preventing him from exterminating all "objective" enemies of his rule. The Christian God would not stand in Stalin's way, and the neopagans' anti-Christianism recognizes the danger to their political program that a true spiritual revival would represent. Neopaganism's promoters remain an influential component of the far right in Russia today.

Hilaire Belloc observed that a post-Christian world would be a darker, more brutish place than the pagan world of antiquity. Indeed, for the most part, antiquity's Greek, Roman, Celtic, and Germanic pagans come off as innocent barbarians at worst, or civilized philosophers at best, in comparison to the assorted Nazis, fascists, communists, and ideological fanatics of all stripes that our own decaying civilization has to offer. Antiquity's pagans may well have been the tall-tale tellers described by Chesterton, spinning myths as a poetic expression of the mystery that was behind the veil of the material world, spawning folk epics to transmit to future generations the story of their people, and leaving the hard search for eternal truths to the philosophers while they themselves went about the business of living by the natural law all men have known. They sensed, as Chesterton put it, "something higher than the gods." Their mythology of gods and heroes, nymphs and fairies was truly noble and humane, if inconclusive. By dignifying modern fanatics' secular political ideologies disguised as mythology with the appellation "pagan," we only insult the gods of the hearth and wood and the men who created them.

*Wayne Allensworth writes from Purcellville, Virginia.*

# Colleges Against Christ

***by Sanford Pinsker***

Mary Beth Edelson's 1977 poster "Some Living American Women Artists/Last Supper" not only means to spread the word that there are, in fact, dozens of American women artists who have not yet become household names, but also to appropriate the sacred images of Da Vinci's "The Last Supper" by giving that point an in-your-face punch. For Edelson, the Catholic Church is largely responsible for the numerical disparity between male and female artists; and as such, Christ and His disciples are simply getting the rough treatment they so richly deserve. Thus, her painting substitutes the head of Georgia O'Keefe for that of Christ (one wonders if Ms. O'Keefe would have been flattered or appalled), sculptor Louise Nevelson for St. Andrew, and makes Judas conspicuous by his/her absence. "Organized religion's penchant for cutting women out of positions of authority," Ms. Edelson argues, implies that "women do not have direct access to the sacred," and by extension to artistic representations of the Divine. Her poster is a willfully provocative effort to change this situation.

Edelson's work is, in short, political to its teeth. But should that work be exhibited at our campus gallery, I would be among the first to defend the right of a legitimate sponsor to give her art wider exposure. I would, of course, also insist that those who choose to view the exhibit might well have a wide range of responses—everything from wild approval to a sense that Edelson is longer on feminist ideology than she is on aesthetics. But what if her send-up of "The Last Supper" were permanently mounted to the wall of a college's Women's Center, as it was at my school, Franklin and Marshall College? Would the same dynamic apply, or would a healthy regard for the feelings of others in the community take quite another turn? Put another way: Can one group's path toward rightful celebration proceed over the back, and at the expense, of another?

The question, then, is a simple one: Do Christian sensitivities on college campuses count? Apparently they do not—at least at Franklin and Marshall, where I teach. Repeated efforts to explain why it is that Mary Beth Edelson's rendition of "The Last Supper" is an affront to believing Christians met with polite, but persistent, stonewalling. At first, the center's executive board made it clear that this was "their space" and they were simply not going to take marching orders from a man—even (or perhaps especially) if he is an Orthodox priest. Besides, this was a matter of First Amendment privilege, and anybody who thought otherwise was guilty of, well, *censorship*. Efforts to suggest that every-



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thing one has a "right" to do might not be *right* to do fell on deaf ears; and as the pressure mounted, the board considered asking the college president to issue a "cease-and-desist" order against Father Anthony Ugolnik, professor of English.

A small group of faculty members unpacked the problem in the pages of our college's newspaper, urging that students think about the implications of turning Christians into a free-fire zone. At the very least, this struck many as yet another example of the double standard: what was unthinkable with regard to blacks or homosexuals or other protected groups (imagine the furor that would justifiably arise over a painting of Minister Louis Farrakhan altered so that he now sported a handkerchief head and Aunt Jemima apron) was defensible, under the First Amendment, when directed at Christians. Why? Partly because many faculty members harbor deep prejudices against believers (try to imagine how embarrassed such folks would be if Scripture were cited during a faculty meeting), and partly because the fanaticism of the Christian right is a handy source for generalized contempt. So great are these worries that, oddly enough, the college chaplain (Barbara Brummett) declined to support an effort to get Edelman's offensive poster moved from its permanent mounting—all of which left others to wonder just what assault to her Christian faith might provoke a response.

For those who put their names—and probably their collegial reputations—on the line, the issue boiled down to this: the Women's Center regularly invites members of the community to join them in a wide variety of programs. The signers made it clear that they applauded these efforts to bring a wider understanding of contemporary feminism to the community, just as they felt that raising public consciousness about the contributions of women was an altogether appropriate activity for a Women's Center. What they couldn't understand, however, is why the same people who would rightly deplore insensitivity directed toward women, African-Americans, Hispanics, gays and lesbians, or other groups should themselves offend Christians. What harm has the Christian community at Franklin and Marshall College done to them that would warrant such behavior?

The implications of this sad situation are, of course, not limited to the college where I teach, nor are they limited to Christians alone. I, for example, happen to be Jewish, and if history has taught the Jews anything, it is that when one group suffers at the hands of injustice, the Jews are not likely to be far behind. But the truth of the matter is that *anyone* who truly cares about the words we keep hearing on our campuses—diversity, caring, and tolerance—should be equally concerned. Unless, of course, Christian sensitivities don't matter. I count myself among the believers, and, as such, I simply cannot believe that such an unworthy position is true.

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# Demonizing the Orthodox

*by John Carlucci*

I teach seventh- and eighth-graders at the St. George Orthodox Church School in West Roxbury, Massachusetts, a purely volunteer task that takes 45 minutes out of my Sunday and two hours out of the rest of the week. The school, which extends from kindergarten to grade 12, is attached to St. George's Church, the Antiochian Orthodox parish for Greater Boston, numbering nearly 1,400 souls. At this, the junior high level, the kids study Church history, a subject for which my degree in Byzantine history qualifies me.

My youngsters are typical American teenagers. Well, maybe not. They go to church every Sunday, and they are active in such church-sponsored programs as Teen SOYO (Society of Young Orthodox) and Antiochian Village, the jurisdiction's largest summer camp. So, while their religious activities distinguish them, they are like other Christian teenagers in America. They like their pizza parties and their rock music, even as they also enjoy their Byzantine chant.

We had just begun discussing the missionary activities of the Church to the barbarians during the early Middle Ages when President Clinton committed American forces to Bosnia. By the time you read this, we will have a pretty good idea of how that military action is going to go, whether the occupation will be peaceful or combative, and whom Americans will be fighting if they must.

At the time of this writing, however, these were still mysteries, and, responsible for the welfare of my students as Orthodox Christians, I faced a problem. Should I mention that imminent armed intervention of the United States in the affairs of an Orthodox people, namely, the Bosnian Serbs? I decided I must.

But how to handle it? Should I aim not to editorialize, hewing closely to official propaganda that Americans were there to keep the peace and that there would be equal treatment for all Bosnians by American forces, regardless of religion or ethnicity? Or should I tell the truth, that the Bosnian Serbs are portrayed by the American press as ferocious savages, killers of mothers and infants, rapists of teenage girls like those in my classroom, all to justify the violent suppression, by American and NATO internationalist imperialism, of the Serbs' right to national self-determination?

Or should I take advantage of this event to illuminate Orthodox history for these kids? That is what the American intervention in Bosnia is, another typical stage in the history of the Orthodox Church and of the Byzantine Christian civilization it created. I knew that these 13- and 14-year-olds were hearing in their public school classrooms and on television that their church cooperated in the past with Bolsheviks and fascists and now with baby-killing thugs, and I knew that I might be the only adult they will meet in these formative years who could tell them the other side, our side, of that story.

It has been the gift of the Orthodox Church and of Byzantine Christendom to stand as the bulwark of civilization against the onslaughts of the barbarians since the time of Christ. It has also been the gift (if you want to call it that) of the Church and Byzantine Christendom to be misunderstood and misrepresented by our brothers in Western Christendom, who have regarded our Church as schismatic, and our culture and traditions as "Oriental" and therefore suspicious.

Always, when that has happened, Western Christians have learned to regret their attitudes toward the Byzantine world, such as after the Fourth Crusade's pillage of Constantinople led to the invasion of Eastern Europe by the Turks, or after the West's failure to confront Stalin



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in Orthodox Eastern Europe at the end of World War II led to the communist subjugation of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and East Germany.

The West is repeating the error. Drawn in by the secularism of Bosnia's cultured elite, Western diplomats are certain that it is the Bosnian Serbs who are fighting for a return to the Dark Ages and against "modernity" and "progress." Western diplomats ignore such signs of future mayhem as the large numbers of Iranian and Afghan fundamentalist Muslims fighting alongside the Bosnian government's forces. Apparently, only when the Bosnian Serbs are crushed, when Bosnia becomes the European headquarters for Islamic anti-Western terrorism, and when to stunned Americans (and to secularist Bosnians exiled by that time to Paris or New York) CNN broadcasts images of fundamentalist Muslims demonstrating in the streets of Sarajevo, will the U.N., NATO, et al., say "Oops!"

But, even if it is Orthodox history in the making, why should it matter to these kids in our country what is going on in Southeastern Europe? I see the answer in who these kids are.

First, they are Orthodox Christians. To advance the New World Order, American propaganda necessarily has played down the Orthodox role in overthrowing communism and rebuilding a free Eastern Europe. While it is safe, for instance, to call attention to the Roman Catholic Church's role in the liberation of Poland (because the Roman Church's organization centers on the international Magisterium), attention cannot be paid equally to the participation of Russian Orthodox monastic clergy in the downfall of the Soviet Union, or to the tangible support given by Rumanian Orthodox priests to the overthrow of Nicolae Ceausescu, because Orthodoxy is fundamentally nationalistic; that is to say, fundamentally at odds with the agenda of the New World Order.

My teenagers will hear in their schools that it is good for people to live in peace, which, of course, it is. But, in the tongue of internationalism, the meaning of "peace" is opposed to what inspires the Orthodox hymn which reads, "Grant victory to the Orthodox people over the barbarians" (a hymn, by the way, which provides the melody for the first section of the "1812 Overture"). International peace requires the marginalization of all religions, to remove them as a *casus belli*.

Orthodox peace is peace for Orthodox people to live according to the precepts of the Orthodox Christian religion, which is not different from the claims made for Zionism. Historically, this had meant frequent war for its attainment, such as that of Emperor Heraclius against the Persians in the seventh century, or of Tsar Alexander I against Napoleon in the 19th century.

Second, they are Americans. In 1995, Orthodox Christian Americans were presented with a serious problem: our Easter Sunday was proclaimed by President Clinton to be a day of mourning for the victims of the Oklahoma City bombing. Church bells were ordered to knell for the dead that afternoon. Ours did not. It is expressly forbidden for Orthodox Christians to mourn on Easter Sunday. I hesitate to say that the coincidence of the national day of mourning with Orthodox Easter was calculated. However, the spectacle of clergy of three of the four major American faiths participating in that day's memorial service in Oklahoma City without the presence of the Orthodox does appear to dovetail nicely with the ongoing demonization of the Bosnian Serbs.

Three generations of Americans have been conditioned by Moscow-based television journalists to associate onion-domed St. Basil's Cathedral in Red Square with Soviet dictatorship. I do not believe for a second that the convenience of once again identifying Orthodoxy with "The Enemy" is lost on either our media or our government. Perhaps the average American did not notice that there were no Orthodox clergy at the memorial in Oklahoma, but if that average American only sees Orthodoxy in relation to Red Square, Russian anti-Semitism, and ethnic cleansing, can he be blamed for concluding that Orthodoxy is not American?

Is it possible, then, in the event of bloodshed involving American troops and Bosnian Serbs, that Orthodox Christian Americans might be forced to choose between their country and their faith? Public defense of the right of Orthodox Serbs to national self-determination has, through the work of the American media, become a defense of rape, pillage, and slaughter. If but one American is killed and his death pinned, rightly or wrongly, on the Serbs, then any defense of our coreligionists would amount to sedition.

That might be extreme, even for 1990's America, but not so extreme would be the lies and insults of my kids' fellow Americans who are not Orthodox Christian. I have already been excoriated on the Internet for being a member of a Church that has had its priests shown on the evening news blessing Serb soldiers. That priests blessing men going off to war is an ordinary occurrence did not matter, because these were Serb soldiers, perpetrators of atrocities, according to Peter and Dan and Tom.

I lost count of how many times I pointed out that Roman Catholic priests and Lutheran ministers served as chaplains to Nazi *Wehrmacht* units during World War II, without besmirching the reputations of those Churches. Then again, however, during that war, the American government took extra care to emphasize that fidelity to Roman Catholicism or Lutheranism did not condone the massacre of Ethiopian villagers or the extermination of the Jews. The Clinton administration sees no need for like care in regard to Orthodoxy and the Bosnian Serbs, despite Mr. Stephanopoulos's presence. Thus, it is not even possible for an American of Orthodox faith to say, "I support the Serbs' right to national self-determination on religious grounds, although I mourn the atrocities."

So, with the Serbs' struggle in Bosnia, I am showing my class that the Orthodox are once again locked in combat for the freedom of the faith, just as the Orthodox were in the seventh century against Islam, and in this century against socialism and fascism. I am warning them that this conflict once again discomfits the world, which has always opposed anyone, be it an individual or a race or a nation or a faith, who has refused to go where the world was going and do what the world was doing. I am also teaching them that a government does not always tell the truth to its people. This was true when Nero said that the Christians burned Rome in the first century, and it is true for 20th-century Washington, when Clinton lies and blames the Orthodox Christian Serbs for having shelled the Sarajevo marketplace.

Finally, I am teaching them that while wars and governments do not endure, the Church will. They must be loyal to their country and their President, but not at the expense of God or His people.

*John Carlucci is the senior editor of NOVO Media Group in San Francisco.*



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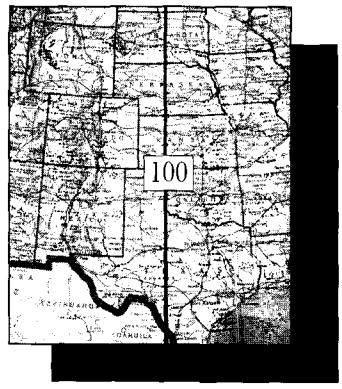
*by Chilton Williamson, Jr.*

## Zia

There is a point along New Mexico Route 6, on the edge of the West Mesa of the Rio Grande, from which as you look east the whole of the river valley between Albuquerque and Socorro—a distance of about 120 miles—appears, backed by the Sandia, the Manzanos, and the Pinos mountains. Obscured by the bosque that accompanies it on both banks, the river slides from beneath the smoky pall of the metropolis, across the Indian reservation past Isleta Pueblo, and down through the historic Spanish communities of Peralta, Los Lunas, Tomé, and Belen in the floodplain. These towns are separated by small farms and dairies, adobe houses, irrigated fields, orchards, cattle pastures, horse corrals, and old mission churches, also of adobe and roofed with tin. In winter time, the fields are sere and yellow, the bosque the color of old silver. Beyond the floodplain the desert of the East Mesa sweeps upward in green-gold waves against the brown and purple folds of the mountains, surmounted by dark pine forests and bright snow. Southward the greater valley widens, separated by a line of distant bergs from a sky of widening blue. This is the Rio Abajo, one of the oldest settled areas of European North America and the most distinct of the various cultural components—Indian, Spanish, "Anglo," Californian, Midwestern, Eastern—that make New Mexico among the more socially complicated of the Rocky Mountain states.

Rio Abajo civilization dates from the 16th century when the Rio Grande Valley was the corridor connecting the Spanish colonies of New Spain and New Mexico, in which the Camino Real ran. It is a mixture of Spanish, Mexican, and Indian culture and blood, in which the Spanish tradition claims dominance. "Hispanics" of the Rio Abajo disdain and dislike Mexicans, having about as much enthusiasm as Americans in California feel for immigrants from south of the border. Here the regional aristocracy are Spanish surnamed—Baca, Luna, Sanchez, Trujillo, Aragón, Jaramillo, Otero, Gallegos—and many of them are blue-eyed. Yet the cuisine is not Spanish but Mexican-Indian—chili, "tortillas" (tortilla in Spanish means a sandwich, not the familiar




disc of flour dough or maize), and refried beans—and the lingua franca the Southwestern equivalent of the franglais of the American Northeast and of Quebec. Spanish as it is spoken in the Rio Abajo would be recognized only with difficulty in Castille or Andalusia, but it is not the patois of Mexico, either. As for Rio Abajo English, while the grammar, syntax, and vocabulary are recognizable by transplants from Chicago or California, and also visitors from Wyoming, the pronunciation, intonation, and inflexion are strange, and wholly original. I was made consciously aware of the fact the winter before last when Jim Rauen drew my attention to it while we shopped at the Albertson's supermarket in Los Lunas. "Did you hear that?" Jim asked. "That's standard English in New Mexico." "What is?" "Checker on line *w-a-a-a*-an, please!" a female employee yelled again over the intercom. After that incident I paid close attention to the local speech habits, picking up such examples as "Oh, he is a school *t-e-e-a*cher!", and, "I'm glad you *l-i-i-i*ke it, man!" In leaving the Rio Abajo, you also leave the peculiarities of speech behind. In Reserve, New Mexico, or in Gallup or Farmington, "Hispanics" may speak English with a Spanish accent or with no accent at all, but they will not direct you to take your groceries to line *w-a-a-a*-an. There is material here for a doctoral dissertation on the American language, but I have never known anyone besides Jim Rauen who recognized the possibilities.

Enthusiasts for multiculturalism and cultural diversity might expect to discover the New Jerusalem in Belen (Spanish for Bethlehem), Los Lunas, et al. If so, they would find disillusionment instead. While "racism" is as frequently discerned and adverted to in the Rio Abajo as in any other portion of modern-day America, intolerance and prejudice are far more likely to be expressed by the "Hispanic" majority than by the "Anglo" minority. Condescending as these self-claimed descendants of the Spanish conquistadores may be toward Mexicans and Indians, they are still less appreciative of Anglo-Americans—and of blacks, of whom there are few, even in Albuquerque. In spite of a large influx of Anglos, many of them retired, from the Northeast, the Midwest, and from California, two decades and more have been insufficient to dissolve the cultural barriers between the old New Mexicans and the new. Hispanics tend not to acknowledge or even to make eye contact with Anglos in public places except when absolutely necessary, or to acknowledge a lifted forefinger on the steering wheel—the recognized high-sign of neighborliness throughout the great open spaces of the Intermountain West. Theologically speaking, the Catholic parish churches of the Rio Abajo are united in one Body; socially, they are divided by race and culture, the two groups having little to do with one another and maintaining a perceptible level of mutual suspicion, if not of outright hostility. A year and a half ago, a blue-eyed scion of the pure Spanish culture, alarmed by what he regarded as a takeover by "Anglos" of the Belen School District, announced his candidacy for an open position on the school board in a race against a well-do-to "Anglo" banker. He won. The truth is, with the influx of Californian and Midwesterners to New Mexico—most of them settling in Santa Fe and in Albuquerque, 65 miles south of the state capital—in the last ten years, the custom and culture of the Rio Abajo are indeed endangered; they may well be overrun and obliterated in the next 20 years, unless haruspices predicting an end to the alien migrations and the resulting economic boom are accurate. The town of Belen is run by a handful of powerful citizens: the Spanish Mafia. In the next ten—even five—years, their control is likely to be broken, their influence swept away by tides of newcomers preceded by cadres of real estate developers, builders, and monied interests with influence of their own.

The new people are mostly retirees or



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employed by Intel, a manufacturer of microchips based in California which has recently built the world's largest manufacturing plant on the edge of the West Mesa across the river from Albuquerque. Arriving from everywhere, the retired build retirement communities for themselves and settle into them behind the adobe walls, palm trees, cedars, and cypresses protecting their country clubs, golf courses, and tennis courts. They keep to themselves, seeing no one from beyond their artificial enclaves and hardly venturing into the surrounding country except to drive on the interstate to visit doctors and dentists, shop, and catch planes in Albuquerque. I have met people, by no means all of them elderly, who have never explored the surrounding mountains; who don't hunt, ride horseback, camp and climb, or even picnic in this spectacular and—relatively speaking—hospitable country. Except for the sun (represented by the stylized Zia symbol on the state's yellow-and-red license plate), the absence of real cold, and the desert expanse, they might as well be living in Oak Park, Illinois, or somewhere on Long Island. In the community of Tierra Grande south of Belen, where Jim Rauen built his house and where the majority of the residents are *not* retired, I have gone months in the past two winters without once seeing a living soul working in his yard, walking on the road, or riding one of the several horses that are boarded here.

The economy of New Mexico, which has a population smaller than that of the borough of Brooklyn, New York, *is* Intel. The plant takes millions of cubic feet of water daily from the Rio Grande and from the immense aquifer underlying the city of Albuquerque to wash its microchips. Since the 1970's, urban growth has depleted the aquifer substantially, and now Intel is proposing to buy water rights 120 miles to the south in the vicinity of Socorro. Rio Rancho, formerly a suburb of Albuquerque and today an incorporated city—in 1995, the fastest-growing in the United States—owes its explosive growth entirely to Intel. Environmentalist groups predictably have gone on the warpath against the company, attempting to mitigate its abuse of the water table. Yet Intel is helping to make New Mexico in one sense the environmentalist movement's dream: its developmental model for the future of the Southwest, and the Intermountain West as a whole. Before Intel, New Mexico had been financially dependent on the federal government: Kirkland Air Force Base, Roswell, White Sands, and Alamagordo. But the United States is not building or testing bombs anymore, and Kirkland Base in Albuquerque barely survived the round of base closings last year. It is unlikely to survive many more rounds. The New Mexican population is predominantly urban, and the rural population under unremitting attack from environmental activists in the cities, who wish to bring ranching, mining, and timber-cutting to an end throughout the hinterland. Increasingly, New Mexico is polarized between high-tech professionals in Albuquerque and Santa Fe, and agricultural and extractive interests around the state. Environmentalists do not want to live in and work with nature, they want to manage it from a distance, venturing outward from the confines of their high-tech and supposedly nonenvironmentally exploitive urban enclaves to play in it without touching, and admire. The achievement of this ideal seems already well underway.

A recent book by Wallace Kaufman (*No Turning Back: Dismantling the Fantasies of Environmental Thinking*, Basic Books, 1994) suggests the potential environmental destructiveness of that ideal. This is ironic, since Kaufman intends to show that what he sees as the repudiation by environmentalism of modern science and technology would, if accepted by society at large, abort the micro- and macromanagement of nature that is necessary to redress the damage done by industrialism to global ecological systems. But Kaufman overemphasizes environmentalists' Luddite propensities by accepting their condemnation of science and technology at face value. Environmentalism is a postmodern phenomenon, like deconstructionism, virtual reality, and collarless shirts. Typically, environmentalists are part of the so-called knowledge revolution, operators of sophisticated electronic systems that power the communications and propaganda industries, as well as industrial science. They belong to the techno-industrial complex that produced Intel, and that Kaufman believes essential to reversing the environmental degradation produced by the old industrialism.

Environmentalists often talk as if they believed that taking rural lands out of productive use and turning them over to recreationists and the recreational industry, while persuading rural populations to withdraw to the cities for their livelihood, were the best and perhaps the only means of preserving the integrity of nature, particularly "wilderness." But as anyone who has recently visited Jackson (Wyoming), Aspen (Colorado), or Prescott (Arizona) knows, in actuality there is no reason from an environmentalist standpoint to prefer the present-day resort town of Park City, Utah, to the mining town that was Park City 100 years ago, but rather the opposite. Today in Park City, people ostensibly do nothing more environmentally destructive than chopping divots from golf courses or, at the worst, adding a new ski run. But the population of the modern town is probably ten times that of the old one; ranch and farm land has been destroyed to make way for it, air quality has been ruined, the terrain disrupted and rearranged by bulldozers—an entire landscape transformed by the hand of man. The problem with the leave-nothing-but-footprints, take-nothing-but-pictures approach to nature is that culture in the true sense of the word is created by work, not by play or "recreation," and that a sustainable relationship between man and nature depends upon the existence of an integral culture. If the rise of techno-industrialism were really the cultural triumph that Wallace Kaufman, George Gilder, and other of its apologists say it is, then why are the centers of techno-industrialism—our blighted cities—the cultural wastelands and nightmares of the human spirit that almost everyone recognizes them to be? The notion that the beauty and integrity of the natural world can or will be protected by people whose daily aesthetic experience is of urban chaos and inhumanity, commercial architecture, consumer culture, and technocratic values is absurd, as the lawyers say, on the face of it. But as New Mexico goes, so goes the West. ©

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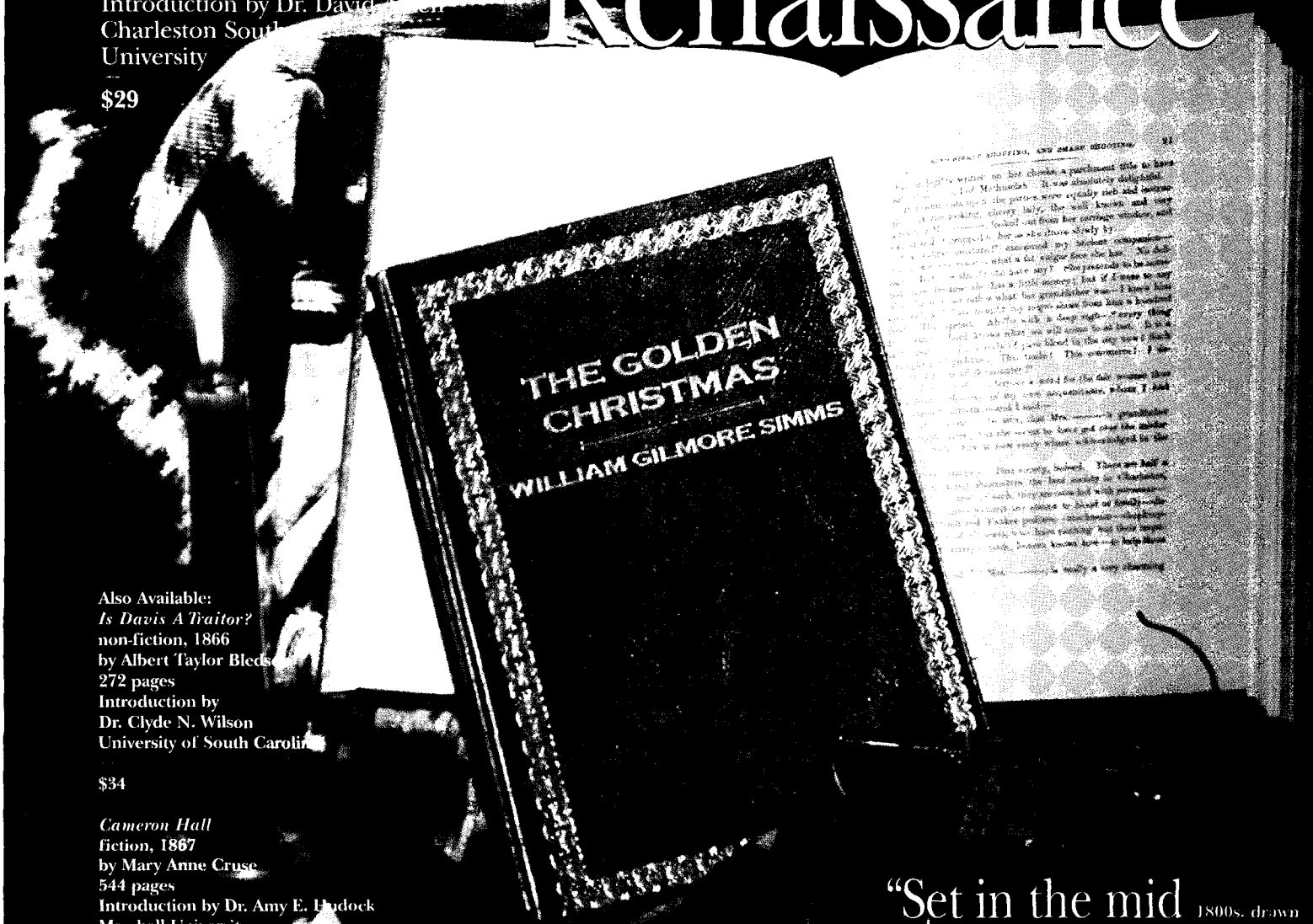


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